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SINAI, THE HEDJAZ, AND SOUDAN.

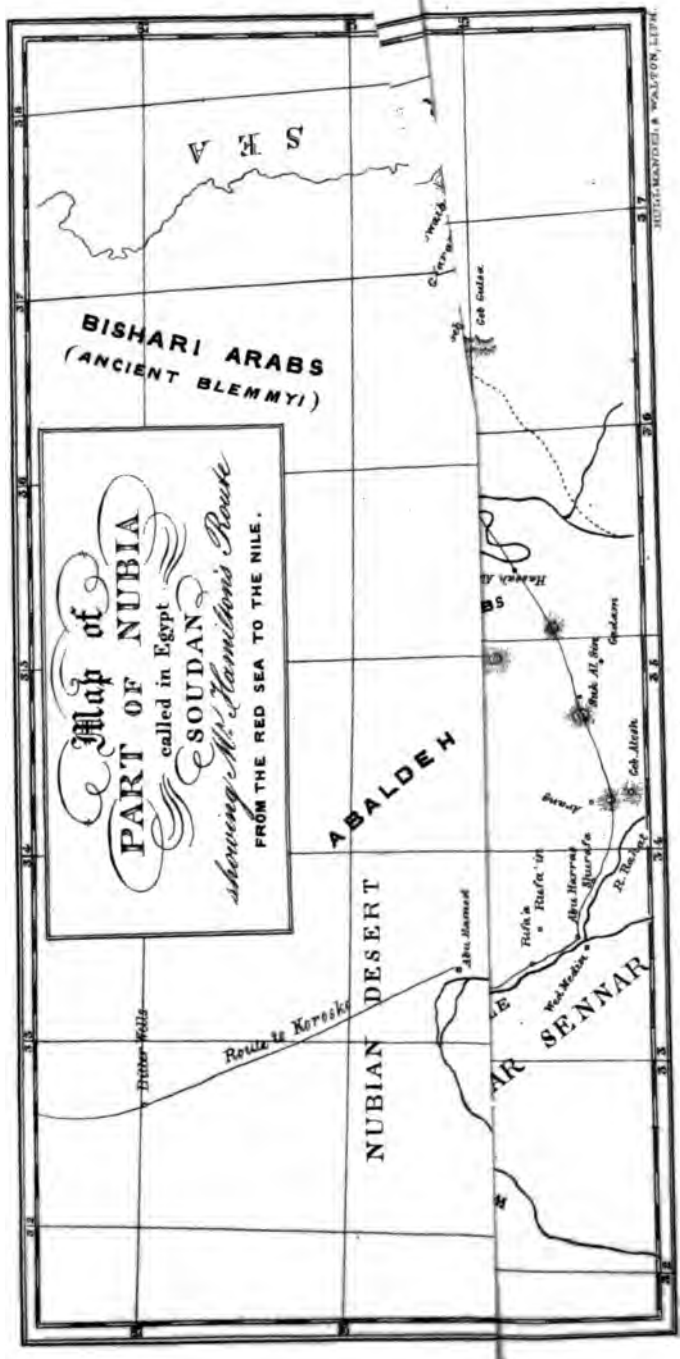












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# SINAI, THE HEDJAZ, AND SOUDAN:

## WANDERINGS

AROUND THE BIRTH-PLACE OF THE PROPHET,

AND

ACROSS THE ÆTHIOPIAN DESERT, FROM  
SAWAKIN TO CHARTUM.

BY

JAMES HAMILTON,

AUTHOR OF "WANDERINGS IN NORTH AFRICA."



LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET,

Publisher in Ordinary to Her Majesty.

1857.

203. c. 77.

**LONDON:**  
**BRADBURY AND EVANS, PRINTERS, WHITEFRIARS.**





## PREFACE.

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I LEARN that after many miscarriages, the notes of a tour made by me three years ago in the countries bordering on the Red Sea have at last found their way to the printer. It is so long since I parted with them that I have but a confused recollection of their contents; but as I am sure that they were true then, I hope that they are not very unlike the truth now. The political bearings of the questions I touched, have changed since I wrote: on some subjects I may have expressed myself more strongly than I should do now; and there are others, which I may have passed over too lightly. Time, which now flies more quickly than it did of old, has affected even the distant countries which I describe. It has given importance to some questions, which I probably neglected; and it has deprived others of the interest

which, when I wrote, seemed to me to be attached to them.

The commercial capabilities of Arabia must be considerable, but they are still unexplored; and its geographical position is hardly less important than the political one it must long maintain as the central point of Islam. To both of these the Sherif 'Abd el Motaleb was fully alive; and if his rule had been continued, I have little doubt that it would have been productive of renewed prosperity to the country. But the storm which threatened when I was at Tayf has overthrown him, and he has been replaced by the same intruded Sherif whom he had succeeded. The Porte perseveres in its system of destroying all hereditary authority; as if under the impulse of Providence, which thus urges it to prepare its subjects for the day when its own shall be annihilated. The Sherif is its last victim. His conduct in this conjuncture was characteristic of a true son of Ali. He knew the danger which threatened him, without preparing to meet it; and when it overtook him, he resisted without other means of defence than an appeal to the popular prejudices, from which he is personally free. He excommuni-

cated the Sultan. The Arabs are ever ready to rise against the Turks; and he was willing, but not ready, to take advantage of the national feeling. He had neither arms nor ammunition for his followers, nor had he any well-formed plan of campaign. He took the field at first with success; but making the fatal mistake of measuring his undisciplined forces with a large body of regular troops, he was obliged to retreat. Instead of retiring into the desert, where he might have reigned secure, and organised the means of driving the Turks from the peninsula, he shut himself up in Tayf, whose crumbling fortifications could not have withstood a siege. Here the mongrel population, never well affected to him, lost no time in delivering him into the hands of the enemy. On this, the most trying occasion of his life, the hereditary weakness and rashness marked his conduct.

I regret his fall, not only because I received kindness at his hands, but also because I believe that he had both the will and the capacity to introduce a better system of government into his country. The insane determination of the Porte to persist in a policy, alike opposed to the solemn engagements of



three hundred years, and to its own best interests, precludes all hope of permanent peace in Arabia. A Sherif imposed by a hated stranger, and not of the old line of princes, can never exercise any real authority over the Arabs. He may bribe them to be quiet, so long as his treasury holds out.

The Emir 'Abd el Motaleb, secure in the veneration which even Turks feel for his descent, has not been treated with harshness. He is now living at Constantinople, after a fortnight's banishment to Saloniki, where his father died a prisoner.

An expedition to discover the still doubtful sources of the Nile has long been my favourite project. When in Soudan, I obtained information which left on my mind no doubt as to its practicability. The present Viceroy of Egypt—a prince not insensible to the claims of science—adopted a plan of operations for this purpose last year, in some respects resembling that of which I have been long an advocate. Unfortunately, the too munificent scale on which it was organised, was destined to secure its failure. An armed escort of 250 men, who would have proved an embarrassment in other respects

than the serious one of the commissariat, was given to protect the mission. This was composed of twelve or more *savans*—all of different countries, internationality being the favourite cant of the day in Egypt. Fortunately, perhaps, the inevitable disagreements which must have sooner or later paralysed such a body, broke out before it had fairly started; and the Viceroy dissolved the commission, with what disappointment or hardship to its members is not for me to inquire. Its failure from the first was not problematical.

Its projectors, aiming at too much, neglected the simple rules which should guide such an expedition. Efficiency in a first discovery does not mean completeness. Scientific pioneers do their work satisfactorily, if they open up the road, and collect, with such accuracy as is possible, information regarding the country, its inhabitants, and productions. Their leader's ambition should be to bring back the members of his party in safety. Having broken the ground, the first and most difficult step, he must be content to leave much for future investigators. According to my calculations, which were made on a most liberal scale, the whole cost of such an expe-

dition, consisting of three members, with European and native servants, would fall short of ten thousand pounds. The Viceroy of Egypt is said to have spent twice this sum on the bootless mission he has just broken up. The precaution of taking a guard is quite unnecessary. The presence of a large body of armed men would of itself suffice to defeat the objects of the travellers. No danger exists after the first 400 miles of the navigation from Chartum. This is the part of the White River frequented by the European traders, and to their violence alone is due the hostility of the natives. After crossing the cataract on the fourth degree, no risk is to be apprehended. A party of ten Europeans, masters and servants, well armed, would have nothing to fear from the attacks of unarmed savages; but from past experience of the tribes of the interior, it is almost certain that they would be friendly to peaceful visitors.

*Fontem quærere Nili* has for more than two thousand years signified to attempt the impossible, but modern science and enterprise have surmounted greater difficulties, and it may be fairly hoped that the Nile will not for many years longer continue

the opprobrium of Geography. It is nearly three thousand years since Homer sang of the descent of the Nile from heaven. Fifteen centuries later Claudian celebrated the unviolated secret which surrounds its sources :

" *Secreto de fonte cadens, qui semper inani  
Quærendus ratione latet ; nec contigit ulli  
Hoc vidisse caput. Fertur sine teste creatus  
Flumina profundens alieni conscia cœli.*"

The problem is still unsolved, but it is not rash to say that it is no longer insolvable. Civilisation and commerce are alike interested in its solution : and if I have no longer the hope of myself realising a long cherished day-dream, I cannot doubt that the poet's exhortation will soon be responded to by one more fortunate than myself—

" *Ite per ardentem Libyam ; superate vapores  
Solis, et arcanos Nili deprehendite fontes !*"

DRESDEN,  
*May 5th, 1857.*





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*Limestone*

*Florida*

**FROM DUNN**  
**TO**  
**T A F**  
**SHEWING M<sup>rs</sup> HAMILTON'S ROUTE,**  
**1854.**

*Long Green*  
*Hillman 1st & Walton 14th*

0°



# SINAI—THE HEDJAZ—AND SOUDAN.

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## CHAPTER I.

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The Cairine Merchant—From Suez to Cairo—Pilgrims from Lahore—  
An economical German—Egyptian bondage—A Red Sea Native  
Crew.

IN early spring, when its first warm breezes breathe fresh life into awakening nature, the man who is gifted with the migratory instinct feels his breast dilate; long pinion-feathers seem to start with rapid growth along his arms, and irrepressible longings urge him to renewed flight. A few days of December-cold in Cairo, just enough to simulate winter, renders more sensible to the traveller the delightful warmth of these early days of the new year. The stifling heat of autumn is gone, and now comes gently on that mild freshness, which covers the vine with leaf-buds, and the almond with flowers.

During the previous summer, I had rested con-

tented in Cairo, enjoying in listless idleness the fountain-murmur, or urging a desultory and vain war against mosquitos. Then the shortening evenings of autumn drove me to the upper floor of my house to avoid the chill damp of the Mandarah, its waters, and its marble floor. With a philosophic indifference I saw the crowd of pains-taking travellers driven up the swollen Nile by their inexorable fate. Boisterous England, noisy France, spectacled Germany, nasal America, male and female, young, middle-aged, and old—all found representatives in the moving medley. There I saw them scampering by, donkey-fashion, pursued by that evil genius the dragoman, sweating and toiling in the pursuit of doubtful and most dear-bought pleasure. Of their frantic exertions, a careless but amused spectator, I spent many a day, seated in a quiet corner of my friend Barakat's stall, in the Khan Chalili.

A solemn Mussulman is Barakat, long and thin, with spare pointed beard, and closely-trimmed moustachios,—the merchant model of Arabian tales. A snow-white turban surmounts his faded parchment-coloured face, from which beam forth two lustrous eyes; a gay silk caftan envelopes tightly his spare body, to which not the ample cloth jibbah, nor even his winter fur pelisse, can impart a comfortable roundness. He is blessed with a numerous family,

all of the gentler sex, and God has, therefore (as one of these fair ladies' husbands told me), smiled upon his commerce, and multiplied his gains; for "those who have many daughters require much wealth for their support, and to such parents it is given to buy cheaper, and sell dearer, than their fellows." No tourist passes through Cairo without paying tribute at Barakat's stall. And Barakat understands the tastes of his Frank customers right well, and can fit them to a nicety with yellow slippers, caftan, amber mouth-piece, embroidered cap, or Persian belt-knife; answering their interminable demands with imperturbable patience and inimitable gravity. Yet has Barakat a quiet humour of his own; and when the usual battle of the prices—conducted ever on his own part with quiet dignity—has been fought, and his customers have departed, he will look round to me with a slight grin, giving a turn to the palm of his hand; which movement, being interpreted, means "majnun, mad."

Thus have I passed many a morning at his stall, an edified spectator of the hard bargains driven by my countrymen, and an unnoticed listener to their instructive ideas of Orientalism. A pipe is an admirable corrective to the twitchings of the mouth, and spectacles cover the glee of tattling eyes; and spectacles, be it known, may now be safely worn

without any risk, through their alliance with the tarbousch, of betraying one's disguise. I have seen a lettered Sheich in the Great Desert wear a huge pair of brass goggles with the gravity of a professor.

The living wave rolled on, but comfortably housed in Cairo, I felt no wish to roll on with it. Christmas and the new year (1854), still found me contentedly lingering there, awaiting until spring should warn me to turn northwards. But this was not to be, for a south wind blew its note of fascination. A friend, the most pleasant of companions (on whose shoulders may now be said to rest the mantle of Burckhardt), proposed that I should accompany him to Suez, on his road to India. I accepted, provided that M. D. would accompany me, and be my traveller back to Cairo. M. D. had an unconquerable aversion to journeying twice over the same ground, which was reasonable enough; so, after much manœuvring to meet the difficulty, we at length decided to proceed from Suez to Gebel Tor by sea, and return thence to Cairo by Cosseir and the Nile. To Mr. Burton we were indebted for the first thoughts of this journey. With a disinterested frankness, too rare among the learned, he also gave me the benefit of valuable suggestions, saving me a world of trouble, and most materially aiding our future progress.

In three days our preparations for departure were

made; a slender store of things needful in the Desert were provided; and, after the customary wrangling, camels were hired to carry them. Passports, also, must be had and paid for, signed, and duly countersigned—a novel infliction, this, introduced by the jealousy of the present Egyptian Governor. The natives, however, do not require them. Then there were a few friendly hands to press on parting; and then away for Suez, leisurely travelling on donkeys along the well-known route. Three nights we slept upon the road, and on the fourth morning reached our destination.

The route is too well known to need description. We will therefore hurry by that huge collection of tasteless buildings, the palace of the Viceroy, called after him the Abassiah, which strikes the traveller's eye on quitting Cairo; great size, bad construction, bright paint, and extensive water-works: these are its characteristics. Post-stations and telegraphs have destroyed the solitary character of the bleak and ugly Desert road. Of stations there are fifteen, at distances varying from five to nine miles; and at three of them are houses of repose for the Indian travellers. Near the fourth station we passed a singular village, composed of a cluster of huts, whose roofs were on a level with the road; the ground had been hollowed out to receive

these subterranean habitations ; they recalled to one's mind the dwelling of the Troglodytes. Hard by this souvenir of antiquity sat modern Egypt, in the shape of a woman, dressed in the dark weeds of her sex, with a basket of oranges before her for sale. About the centre station the road reaches its highest elevation ; from hence it descends to the sea. Here a little way on the left may be seen another of the many palaces of the Pasha, picturesquely resting on the side of a hill, and resembling a feudal fortress. The palace, though smaller than Abassiah, will yet contain a very numerous suite ; when the viceroy is here with his guards, the household does not number less than six hundred persons. But yet everything requisite for such a host must be brought from Cairo ; there is not even a blade of grass to be had, and every drop of water consumed there is brought on camels' backs.

Near the station we passed a covered waggon, which was conveying rations to the servants at the palace ; it was drawn by a camel, and the harness ingeniously contrived, so as to throw the main point of traction on the hump, the shafts being at the ordinary height. I have not heard that the camel is used elsewhere for draught in Egypt ; but in the Barbary states the animal is employed for tillage, and in the Crimea is frequently harnessed in carts.

This animal is unfitted for draught, except on level roads.

It would seem that several ships had lately arrived from Jiddah. We had already met some parties of two and three individuals coming from that port; and now we came upon a long string of camels, carrying a portion of those ships' cargoes to the capital. Bags of coffee and gum, on which were perched one or two black slaves, boys or girls all nearly naked, formed the chief burdens. Some men and a woman also were seen seated on portable bedsteads of palm-twine, such as are used in the Hedjaz, laid like a scaffolding across the camels' loads. One, a Meccan, in the gay costume of his country, was delicately shading his dark orange complexion from the sun, by the aid of a blue and yellow leaved parasol. The lady, as we passed, carefully arranged her veil, so that the Franks might have a glimpse of her charms.

Hardly had these gone by, when we came up with a party of Indian pilgrims, four men of different ages, and an old woman, wife of the Nestor of the party, who drove before her a donkey laden with an old carpet and saddle-bags, containing their provisions. They had come from Lahore to Mecca by way of Buschir, and seized with a desire to see Cairo had extended thither their travels; they were now returning to their starting-place by way of Bagdad.



Ignorant of, and alike indifferent to, time and distance, at each new halting-place they obtained directions how to reach the next; they neither inquired, nor cared about the state of the countries through which they passed; revolutions could not effect them for good or for ill; and they who have nothing to lose can laugh in the robber's face. They were delighted to find in our companion, one who could speak their language like themselves; and not the less, that he added something to their scrip. We think ourselves travellers, when, with all the essential conveniences of life about us, we have visited the more or less civilised and peaceable countries of Europe and Western Asia; but who of us would undertake a journey, such as this old man and his wife have already performed?

Further on we came upon a group of labourers and Arab engineers, whose green tents formed a pretty group upon the left. They were busy repairing the road. Some portion of their labours excited astonishment. To mark the line of road, they were raising parapets of sand on either side, which sand each gust of wind would strew across the road. I now found an explanation of certain low sand-heaps we had passed, which had appeared to me as curious phenomena—they were the dwindled remains of the engineers' parapets.

A Frank, kneeling on the ground, under the shade of a broad-brimmed wide-awake, next stimulated our laudable curiosity; by his side was a camel, and before him spread a white napkin. He was a German, going to join the Indian steamer; he had been travelling all night, and was now, by the aid of a portable kitchen, preparing his breakfast. A wise man and an economical! he, like ourselves, to avoid the expensive jolting of the Transit omnibus, had hired a camel which carried his slender baggage and himself.

Nearer Suez the Mokattam hills, which had stretched away to the right as we left Cairo, again appear on the near horizon; and thanks to this background a few pretty spots may here be found. In one of these, about twenty miles from Suez, we slept on the third evening of our journey. We encamped with the setting sun in the dry bed of a torrent, under tamarisk trees, in which numerous feathered warblers kept up a constant chirruping: the ground around was enamelled with the sweet smelling *shich* (absinthe), and the broad-leaved *takrou*, whose flowers have intoxicating properties.

Eight miles further on, is the one solitary well of the road; it is enclosed in a small building, near which is a square fortalice, called the Castle of Ajroudeh. The well, thus placed outside the castle,

furnishes a bitter water to the dozen peasants, who form its garrison; and suffices for cattle drink. It is the second station of the pilgrim caravan to Mecca. Just beyond it is obtained a view of the Red Sea; on the left, are the flat sands which lead to the Wady El-tih, "The Maze." On the right, is the last of the Mokattam hills, stretching into the sea, and forming the first point of the land of Egypt, which is saluted by the pilgrim on his journey homewards, and hence called Gebel 'Atāka—the Hill of Deliverance from the perils and fatigues of the weary march. A little further on, a second point, Abu Darraj, the Hill of Stairs, blue in the morning haze, becomes visible, running far into the sea. The town of Suez is not seen until we are within half an hour of its gates.

At this point, we found a caravan, halted for breakfast. It was pleasant, but melancholy, to see the black slave boys and girls enjoying their bread, dates, and onions, delighted once again to find themselves on *terra firma*, and near to Cairo, where they would find in servitude a lot far happier than their present one. It is to be hoped that this degrading traffic is near to its extinction. The Pasha, I hear, has forbidden the purchase of slaves by his Christian subjects; and as the laws of the Ottoman empire proclaim the perfect equality of Mussulman and

Unbeliever, it only requires an energetic note from England or France, to put a stop to the sale of slaves at once throughout Egypt. This logical deduction from his own acts would not, perhaps, be pleasing to His Highness. Doubtless, domestic slavery in the East is not disgraced by the horrid cruelties which are associated with slavery in Christian countries. To be a slave, where all are slaves of the sovereign, is no disgrace; slaves here become the higher order of domestics, and as such are better cared for and more respected than free-born servants. Those belonging to great families are, whether white or black, often promoted to public offices of trust. A black slave of H. H. is, or was lately, Prefect of one of the northern provinces, and H. H. is rapidly filling all public offices with his white slaves. I have seen a black eunuch belonging to a distinguished harem, received with the greatest consideration by the Prefect of police, and smoking his pipe, loll back upon the divan, with all the familiarity of a superior. But on the other hand, instances of great cruelty are not unknown; and it is a matter of notoriety, that the white Mamelukes are almost invariably the victims of their master's depravity.

Suez offers little for remark. Its population has been of late years more than doubled by the Indian traffic. It contains several okels for the reception

of the merchandise of the natives, a splendid hotel, and one good house, built by the East India Company for their agent, the British vice consul. All travellers tell of its brackish waters.

*January 21.*—The French Agent, M Costa, must be mentioned with gratitude. He procured us a *sambuk*, a half-decked boat of about twenty tons burthen, the master of which was recommended as a trusty man. And now we must part from the pilgrim of Mecca. Having still forty-eight hours to pass at Suez before he can depart for India, he kindly conveys us on board our stout bark *Ham-diah*, the “ Praised be God ;” and solemnly does he commend us to the charge of the captain, Halil, which act of commendation his venerable character as Sheich and Hajy enables him to perform with no small unction. And then we parted with regrets and hopes,—he to steam down the sea with all the appliances of modern science, and we to make out our navigation in a ship probably of the same construction as those which sailed from Elath (Akaba) to seek gold and Indian rarities in Ophir, with a crew speaking the same language with, and alike in race to, the sailors of Solomon. And we were not long in discovering further marks of resemblance between the respected ancients and their modern representatives, in regard to navigating powers ; for,

though the wind blew fair and well, within an hour and a-half we had anchored off the point of Abu Darraj; and there we tossed the night through, making most unpleasant acquaintance with our ship and crew.

Our vessel was a two-masted boat, fifty feet long by fourteen feet wide mid-ship, and eight feet wide at the stern, having a cabin eleven feet by seven, and four high. From the waist she made nearly a triangle to the prow; her stern depressed, and her sharp bows rising from the water. The crew consisted of the captain, ten men, and a black boy—all, except the latter, natives of Yambo, though settled at Jiddah. The boy would have made Monboddo's reputation and theory secure; he was the most unpleasant representative of the lords of creation I ever saw; his facial angle, since Blumenbach has proved it, was doubtless sublimely grander than the most advanced of monkey-genus; but the general cut of the youth's physiognomy was so remarkable, as to be decidedly inconvenient to any one who upholds the close links of fraternity which unite black to white.

At sunrise our timid Reis once more resumed his course, but though a strong wind blew in our favour, we did not reach Tor until another night had been passed on board. Tor is a miserable hamlet,

consisting of about twenty cabins, twelve of which are inhabited by Christians of the Greek rite. The huts are constructed of madrepores, picked out of the sea; in one piece of wall I counted eleven different species. The sea is also surprisingly rich in conchylia, the *débris* of which lie thickly strewn along the shore.

Our first business was to engage camels to carry us to Mount Sinai. We then walked an hour's journey to the tepid springs, called 'Ain Mousa, over which a commodious and well-furnished bath has been built by the Pasha. The springs contain iron and sulphur, and issue from the base of the Gebel Hammam, at a temperature of 83° Fahrenheit. They water a large plantation of date trees, which chiefly belong to the Greek monks.



## CHAPTER II.

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Abbas Pasha's Mountain Road—The Pass of the Convent—Convent Bill of Fare—Church of St. Catharine—Its ornaments—The Library.

WE had much difficulty in procuring dromedaries to carry us to Mount Sinai. Abbas Pasha was projecting a palace in these parts, and all the animals at hand had been put in requisition to aid in the construction of the road which is to lead thereto. The animals we at length obtained were so exhausted, that even with our light loads they could make but a slow move of it. From Tor a long sandy flat, called El A'our, stretches to the foot of the majestic range of mountains, right-well named the Black,—*μελανή όρη*. The rugged peaks of Mount Serbal occupy the centre of the group; to the right rises Omm Shommar, and between them lies the defile of Wády Hebron, which leads up to Sinai. Five hours it took us to reach the hills, which seemed at Tor scarcely half an hour distant. The sky had clouded over early in the morning, and at mid-day the summits of the mountains were hidden



in dark vapours; at length heavy rain began to fall in the plain, and then forked lightnings were seen playing in vivid flashes around the rocks, and issuing in every direction from their black barren sides, and thunders, repeated in a hundred echoes, rolled loud and terrible overhead.

Such was the moment when Sinai should be seen; and we could only regret that we had not been one day earlier, to have witnessed this war of the elements in the rocky defiles of the mountain itself. The rain ceased, and in less than half an hour the thirsty sand was again dry, but the plain and the mountain-sides were still chequered with the shadows of the heavy white clouds which rested in the air.

At the entrance of the pass, a short way up which the new road is completed, we passed through a camp of soldiers, the so-called engineers, who are employed in making it. The well-filled hospital, and the officers' and the common soldiers' tents, formed a long street, through which we rode with stopped nostrils, glad to escape the pestilential smells hanging around. An hour further up the valley we encamped near a beautiful natural bath, formed in the granite by the streamlet 'Ain Hebron, called by the natives the Christians' Pool, "Birket el nosrany."

The road-making was easy work enough in the

plain, but here, on entering the pass, the difficulties had begun. A carriage way has to be carried through rocks, which resist obstinately even the gunpowder's blast; and the sharp glass-like edges of the granite soon wear away the workmen's shoes, and cripple their feet. From this cause, from sickness produced by bad diet, and from accidents, there are generally one hundred of the eleven hundred men in hospital. The men are paid fourpence a day extra pay, and, strange to say, they really get it, but still they hate the task, and regard it as the work of galley-slaves. They frequently desert, but the chances of escape for them are small; if they die not of hunger in the desert, they are pretty surely captured by the Bedowin, who on delivering them up receive a 100 piastres' reward per head. To sharpen the officer's surveillance, a portion of his pay is deducted each day a man is absent from his company. To give an idea of the expense of this undertaking, I may state, that 2 lbs. of gunpowder are required to blast every cubic yard of rock, and twenty-four days' labour of one man to bore the mines, or, in other words, eight shillings of cheap labour and four shillings of powder. The distance to the foot of Gebel Musa is seventy-two miles, of which the twenty miles completed are the easiest. The site of the proposed palace is Gebel Asmar, a

hill at present inaccessible in the direction of Mount St. Catharine; as projected, it will be an edifice of one story, containing forty-two rooms; all the materials for its construction—except granite and lime—must be brought from Europe. This whim will probably cost more than the railway from Alexandria to Cairo.

The valley, through which the road ascends for three hours, following the course of the stream, is rendered charming by the small clumps of uncultivated date-trees, which rise between the granite walls, wherever the winter torrents have left sufficient detritus for their nourishment. These, a few manna tamarisks (Terfah), and mimosas, a woody shrub called the Rattam, which even when green makes a good fire, and another not unlike the broom—are the plants met with in the Wady. The precipitous ascent of the first passage, Nagb Hebran or Nagb el'Ajary, took us nearly four hours. From its summit a short descent leads to the Wady Es-Slaf—a long winding plain, where we encamped for the night.

The cold wind blew with violence down the gorges, and so benumbed the camel-drivers, that it was late before we could start the next day. At the further end of the plain commences the second ascent, Nagb-el-deir—the pass of the convent. It is as steep, and in places more difficult than the Nagb

Hebran. Along its course may be seen, here and there, the remains of a paved road, which tradition ascribes to the pious munificence of the Empress Helena, but which was more probably the work of the monks, who in the sixth and seventh centuries were collected in and about Mount Sinai to the number of many thousands. The scenery here is most terribly grand; no description could do justice to its general effects. The bare rocks rise on every side in long succession fantastically coloured,—grey, red, blue, bright yellow, and bronze,—sometimes strangely marked with white lines of quartz, or black bands of basalt; huge blocks, worn into fantastic shapes, and round which the laden beasts wind their way with difficulty, interrupt the narrow track which successive ages have worn along the face of the precipice, or hanging overhead threaten to overwhelm the traveller in their fall. Beneath, lies a veritable chaos, through which now trickles a slender thread of water, where in winter rushes down a boiling torrent. The time-polished faces of the rocks send back each sound in a hundred echoes, and at some points of the pass the report of a gun reverberates like a long roll of thunder. A few vultures soaring overhead, longingly eyeing our wearied camels, were the only living animals to be seen.

Reaching the summit we stand at once on the

edge of a table-land, which is bounded on three sides by the mountains of Sinai. This is Wady Er-racha—the plain of repose—about three miles broad. At its furthest limit rises the group, which contains Sinai and Horeb, and between this and the hill called of St. Episteme (Holy Science) runs the pass, on the sloping side of which is seen a fortress-like mass, whose heaviness is relieved by a few projecting towers and a minaret. This is the Hostelry, established under the name of St. Catharine, or of the Transfiguration. Here we proposed to pass the next day, and after the chilling of the past night, looked forward with pleasure to the shelter of its hospitable walls.

On entering the Wady Er-racha, the edifice appeared close at hand, but it was more than an hour before we reached it. Banners floated from its walls, for this day was one of the two hundred annual festivals of the monks. Outside the convent were stationed some soldiers, and here for the first and only time during our six months' tour were we asked for our passports. We were next detained beneath the walls of the fortress, and held a parley with our ghostly hosts, who apostrophised us from a window some twenty feet above; the window being furnished with the invariable crane and windlass of Greek convents. They were chagrined, the

holy fathers, and puzzled at our travelling without a dragoman. After a time we were directed to a low door at the back of the building; this opened into a small court, from whence passing through two gates strongly plated with iron, we found ourselves within its precincts. Next by a precipitous flight of wooden steps we were ushered into a balcony, on which opened the rooms provided for guests. After a short time the brother Dispenser brought us excellent araki — convent-manufacture—dates and coffee. Then visited us he, who delighted in the office of Economist; and by him we were enlightened concerning certain rules of the House. We were to enjoy a well-taxed hospitality, it seemed, and this was the tariff:—

Visit to Mount Sinai . . . . .	1 Dollar.
Two Arabs to carry coffee . . . . .	14 Piastres.
Brother Dispenser . . . . .	1 Dollar.
Curé, visit to church . . . . .	1 Dollar.
Service . . . . .	1 Dollar.
Brother Porter . . . . .	1 Dollar.
Hoisting luggage . . . . .	3 Piastres.

Wood for fuel, milk, sheep, eggs, fowls,—all at prices three or four times those of Cairo,—were to be bought of the Arabs at the convent door, but “for fear the poor creatures should lose their money among the stones,” we were requested to pay them only through the hands of the brother Oekonomos. The

establishment sells sausages of Sinai dates, with almonds, araki, villanous Crete wine, and little silver rings, blessed at St. Catharine's shrine; of the latter articles we did not lay in a stock to gratify our lady friends in Europe, because the value of the benediction and of the metal seemed so monstrously disproportioned; also were to be bought little boxes of manna, and madrepores, and star-fish from Tor; all, as Harpagon says, "agreeable curiosities."

Next day we visited the sights within the walls. The church without belfry (for the Greeks use a wooden board to call to prayers) and the minaretted mosque stand side by side in the centre of the building in most edifying harmony—the latter as remarkable for its absence of ornament, as the former for its rich decoration. Externally, the church has not an imposing effect, its pavement being several feet below the level of the court, and low mean buildings, such as disfigure so often the old churches of France and Germany, surrounding it on every side. It is well and solidly built, and its style of architecture smacks of that called Romanesque in Germany, and Lombard in Italy. The windows are double round-headed, the arches springing from a short column, and resting on a half column on each side. The doorway, to which you descend by a flight of steps, is large and simple,

and leads into a *pronaos*, from which a second door of the same dimensions gives entrance to the church.

The first view of the interior of the church is striking, both on account of its richness and its brilliancy, and of the picturesque grouping of the furniture with which it is filled; its cleanliness is admirable, and many of the details well merit close examination. It is divided into a nave and aisles by two rows of red granite columns, six in each row. The columns are whitewashed, and their capitals (likewise of red granite) are painted green, and carved in a style which would in European art denote a date of the ninth or tenth century. At the fifth column is placed the screen, concealing the high altar and the apse; it is a heavy piece of gilding, covered with bad modern pictures of the Russian School of sacred art, and is surmounted by a gigantic crucifixion with St. Mary and John. The roof is flat, and painted of a bright blue sprinkled with gold stars; amidst these are circular paintings, let in at equal distances, apparently of the seventeenth century; and just beyond the centre is observed a pierced decoration, representing the sun, the moon, and the stars, which serves to admit air into the building; from this hung down three remarkably fine bronze lustres, and a great multitude



of silver lamps, the pierced workmanship and forms of which are in some instances really remarkable.

The unstained, unspotted pavement is an Alexandrine mosaic of various coloured marbles, terminating in two steps at the screen; before the screen are placed six gigantic candlesticks, whose pedestals are each supported by three lions. The pulpit is of white marble, painted and gilt; the iconostasis, of inferior workmanship, with the seat of the precentor, and a row of stalls, are on the Gospel side of the nave, and extend halfway down it; the throne of the archbishop (who resides in Constantinople), and the chair of the prior, with corresponding stalls, face them. The walls and columns are adorned with pictures of very various sizes; some of which contain a single head, others hundreds of figures, executed in the style of a miniature; so far as I could see, none of them were of great antiquity or of any merit.

The high altar, with its canopy of wood, is incrustured with a beautiful mosaic of mother-o'-pearl and tortoise-shell; round three sides of it runs a low rail, against which are ranged evangeliaries with silver covers, one of which may be of the date of the thirteenth century. Behind these, stuck on points in the railing, are circular silver-gilt plates, embossed with heads of cherubim, a crucifix of silver stuck with

stones of no great value, and a very beautiful cross of ancient workmanship, adorned with emeralds, and used for giving the benediction in the Greek rite.

A number of other objects,—copes, reliquaries, chalices, &c.,—too numerous and not of sufficient interest to inventory, are placed upon the cover of a semi-circular cupboard which runs round the wall of the apse. The apse contains a fine mosaic of the eighth century. It represents the Transfiguration, with a border composed of white circles, in which are heads of the apostles; and on the external part, “the triumphal arch,” the two corners are filled with representations of Moses with the burning bush, and the same prophet bearing the tables of the Law; below these, filling the remaining spaces, are the heads of Justinian and his worthy consort Theodora. These pictures are in excellent preservation, but it is difficult to trace in their execution the epoch which produced the admirable portraits of the same personages and their suite which adorn the choir of St. Vitale of Ravenna.

To the right of the apse, in the intercolumniation, is the sarcophagus of white marble, and of antique workmanship, (of the fifth century?) which is said to contain the bones of St. Catharine, and immediately behind the apse is the Chapel called of the Burning

Bush. Here we were told to take off our shoes, and then entering a thickly carpeted chamber about 16 feet by 8, we were shown beneath the altar, which is here raised on four pillars, the spot which is venerated as that where the unconsumed bush was seen by the Prophet; the hole is shown in which it grew, and around the hole the floor is covered with embossed plates of silver. Coloured windows admit a feeble light, and give to the chapel an air of mystery, which is increased by the darkness of the walls; these are covered to a height of about 6 feet with tiles of porcelain, painted in arabesque pattern, and above this with small dark paintings on gold ground. The cleanliness of the whole church was admirable; it is the only one I ever saw which was well kept, and at the same time comfortable. The two pairs of folding-doors are said to date from A.D. 670; from their carving I should have thought them somewhat later, but the Byzantine is a style of art whose date it is difficult to judge of; on the inner pair are two small enamels on copper of the twelfth century, which may have been formerly the cover of a book.

I omit all account of apocryphal treasures which the monks pretend to possess, and which I did not see; I have little doubt that many objects of far greater artistic value than those we saw may be secreted in

their repositories, or thrown aside in their lumber-rooms. From the church we went to the library to see the celebrated Book of the Gospels written by the Emperor Theodosius. It is not the Gospels, but an Evangeliary, that is, the lessons from the Gospels read throughout the year in the Greek ritual; its date cannot reach beyond the ninth century. This being premised, I may add, that it is one of the most splendid Byzantine manuscripts in existence, written on parchment, still of the purest white, in burnished gold uncials. The initial letters are all highly decorated and fanciful, many of them representing birds; the first lines of many of the lessons are also in decorated character, and the whole abounds in curious abbreviations, which render it not easy to decipher. Its chief value is derived from the sixteen miniatures at the beginning, representing our blessed Lord, the Virgin, St. John Baptist, and the Apostles; each fills a page and is drawn at full length in the best style of Byzantine miniature-painting; from their perfect preservation they may rank among the very finest specimens of that style of art now extant. I need hardly add, that this celebrated volume is entirely destitute of critical or literary value.



### CHAPTER III.

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Ascent of Mount Sinai—Grandeur of the Scenery—The Monks like Money—"God is with the patient"—A storm on the Red Sea—The Stables of Antar—Arab Barter—Yambo—Its Bazaar—Volunteer Warriors—Jidda—Retrospect.

At midday we started to ascend the Gebel Musa, a most fatiguing climb up a cleft in the rock immediately behind the convent. It is a sort of perpendicular staircase, irregularly formed of rough blocks of granite, much steeper than, and four times as high as the great pyramid. Half-way up is the deserted chapel of the Madonna, marking a supposed station in the flight into Egypt. At the top of this is a plateau, walled in by rocks, having on the north the peaks of Horeb, and on the south that of Sinai. In its centre is a pond, and by this grows a solitary cypress, surrounded by a circle of stones. A well and a chapel close by, on the ascent to what is now called Mount Sinai, are named after the Prophet Elias, whom the Scriptures state to have sought refuge from the persecutions of Jezebel in the solitudes of Horeb. (3 Kings, xix.) This flat plain, with its wall

and obeliscal cypress so completely shut out from the world, seems the natural place in which to seek the ruins of the Convent of Our Lady, built on Mount Sinai by Justinian. No doubt the chapel of St. Elias formed a part of it. A more lonely site could hardly be imagined by the votary of retirement, and yet it is, perhaps, the least melancholy in this neighbourhood. True, that the bare rocks of Sinai and Horeb encompass it on every side; that every sight and sound of the world are shut out; but the well tells of the waters of truth, which alone quench the longings of the thirsty soul; and the tall cypress seems to lift its living finger to Heaven, pointing out the one exit from a prison, whose solitude may have been enlivened by ineffable hopes, as it now is by the green grass and scattered wild flowers. Here I left my companion, who was little inclined to risk an ascent, described as still steeper than that which we had just accomplished. He remained alone to invoke the Heavenly muse, who on the secret top of Horeb did inspire the Hebrew Shepherd, while I, with the lay brother and servants, more prosaically climbed a path which, if not dangerous, certainly demanded a good deal of circumspection.

There still remained nine hundred feet to the summit of the mountain. About two-thirds up we

passed a frozen streamlet. Its presence in this situation, mentioned also by Edrisi, seems to me an argument of the identity of Gebel Musa with the Sinai of the Scriptures. A little beyond this, on the left, enclosed in a circle of loose stones, is the foot-print left by the Arabian prophet's camel, or rather the Borak, during his night journey to heaven, the other foot having alighted on the Sakhra in Jerusalem. My conductor amused me by his determined attempts to shy the subject, endeavouring to prevent my remarking the relic, by engaging in earnest conversation as we approached it. Yet I had listened with such ingenuous simplicity to all he told me, that I think I merited greater communicativeness on this specimen of the handiwork of his predecessors. I regret to say that his answers to the questions I persisted in putting to him were curt and ungracious, though I displayed no incredulity regarding the authenticity of the relic, and expressed myself as politely in speaking of Mohammed, as I had done with regard to Saidna Musa. But there are churls upon whom all politeness is thrown away.

On the summit stands the ruined chapel and mosque which mark the spot where the Hebrew Law was given. A cleft in the rock is pointed out as the place where the Most High conversed

with Moses. From this highest point, which is little more than thirty feet in diameter, the view, especially to the north and west, presents a countless succession of granite peaks without a trace of vegetation; to the east runs a long broad wady, beyond which ranges of bronze-coloured mountains succeeded by hills and tracts of yellow sand. From the top of Sinai the mountain of St. Catharine lies due s. w. The island of Tiran at the mouth of the Gulf of Akaba, s. s. e. (E. 64 s.); Serbal N. w. (W. 38 N.); Horeb nearly N. N. w. (N. 27 W.) It is not, however, the lines of mountain tops, nor the long expanse of desert which the eye embraces, but the scene immediately at his feet which impresses the beholder. Long ridges of arid rock surround him in chaotic confusion on every side; the sharp broken peaks of granite far and near are all equally desolate. Mighty floods seem once to have burst over the mountain tops, breaking them like potsherds, filling the valleys below with huge boulders, in their furious course depositing no fertile soil. In these arid regions nature appears dead; the very stream which issues near the summit was frozen, and all around looked dry and blasted as Judaism itself. The world presents, perhaps, few places so fitted to be the scene of the events recorded to have occurred in them as this; the stern majesty of those mountains, the wild



grandeur of the rocky passes which lead to them, are well calculated to impress the mind with awe. They who perhaps had blenched at the mimic terrors of the Egyptian mysteries, might well quail at the sight of the Creator's works, grander than the temples and pyramids of Egypt,—at the sound of his thunders more terrible than the oracles of Ammon. It required all these circumstances, and all were not enough, to subdue the self-willed people into submission to a dispensation whose severity was called for by their own backslidings. It may almost be said that Sinai explains Judaism. How unlike the fertile downs and smiling shores which surround the teeming waters of the Sea of Galilee, where the later and more easy revelation was first made!

After scrambling down the really dangerous staircase as far as the chapel of St. Elias, we turned to the right and returned to the convent by a convenient carriage-road winding round the east of the mountain, which has in one place been blasted to admit its passage. This is another of the present Viceroy's caprices, which the traveller will bless so long as its effects last; but as it was made in a great hurry to enable him to encamp last summer on the plateau of the fountain of Elias, and constructed by a native engineer, the rains of a few winters will probably wash it away. Already, though this has

been a dry season, it exhibits symptoms of the decay to which all things Turkish are doomed. In descending, one leaves to the right the conical green-coloured but perfectly herbless hill, on which Moses was feeding his father-in-law's sheep, when he saw the burning bush in the pass below. It closes the top of the pass between the group of Sinai and the hill of St. Episteme, half-way down which the convent lies, not inaptly dropped between the mountain of the Divine Law and that of Holy Science: the one, if the tales of the Arabs and our own observations may be trusted, its inhabitants interpret after a fashion of their own; the other, they assuredly neglect.

The convent of the Forty Martyrs, even the mould in which the golden calf was cast, did not tempt us to prolong our stay; and the next morning we prepared to return to our boat. We had spent a day and two nights in the convent, and paid most extravagantly for everything we had taken, excepting the bread which the convent by its constitution is bound to furnish gratis to all passers. After discharging a regular bill of bachshishes amounting to about thirty shillings, we considered a sovereign a sufficient return for our lodging. Just before we started, however, one of the religious came to say that the prior, whom we had not yet seen, would

pay us a visit, at the same time begging that we would put our offering into his hands. In the sequel we had every reason to believe, that his fine head and venerable beard were thus brought forward at the last moment to increase our liberality; and I acknowledge that when a few years younger I should not have ventured to offer so respectable-looking an old gentleman less than five times as much as we intended to give. We were, nevertheless, insensible to the magic of his gray hairs, and with the effrontery of ignorance, presented our single sovereign, which was received, not as we had supposed in silence or with thanks, but with expostulations, which, growing louder, quickened into such violent abuse, that my companion, who slowly relenting already held his purse in his hand, meaning to produce another of those images of our sovereign lady for which the monks showed so great a devotion, replaced it in his pocket; and we left the convent literally pursued by the clamours of the community. Only twice in all my travels have I met with discourtesy from religious—it was of churlish incivility, not of such glaring rapacity, that I had to complain in the convent of Spanish Franciscans at Jaffa. In the monasteries of Syria, where everything is supplied to the guest and his servants, and no backshiches are expected, two dollars a day for each master are con-

sidered an ample remuneration for the hospitality received ; though of course a single traveller with a numerous suite would give somewhat more.

January 31.—One seldom passes a day in the East without being reminded half a dozen times, that "God is with the patient," a comfortable doctrine of Arab piety or laziness, which serves to excuse or justify every delay. You engage camels, and at the time appointed they are not in readiness ; you seek for the owner, and probably find him smoking in the coffee-shop or listening in the market, and he tells you that "God is with the patient ;" you growl out a few angry reproaches, and the friend who has come to visit you insinuates that you are in too great a hurry—at all events, "God is with the patient." At last you start up in a flutter of indignation, and go to vent your complaints to the authority of the place, Mudir, Kashef, Nazer, whatever he may be called ; he receives you civilly, summons the offender, expostulates with him, and then turns to you with the stereotyped assurance, that "God is with the patient." I am sometimes uncharitable enough to think that the abundance of this virtue which Orientals possess, may account for the scanty share of other virtues which seems to have fallen to their lot.

Early in the morning of the day which followed

our return to Tor, we were under sail for Jidda. The winds are almost constantly favourable for descending the Red Sea, and it was not the weather therefore which occasioned us the constant use of the consolatory phrase I have quoted. We steered almost due South, and were soon out of sight of land, having left the Ras Mohammed—the furthest point of the Sinaitic Peninsula—a good deal to the left. This was an important day for the Reis and his crew, as it was necessary to continue under sail all night, in order to cross the Gulf of Akabah. The thought of the daring feat he was about to perform seemed to preoccupy him all the morning; by mid-day he had produced a wooden-mounted compass, with a gaudily coloured and strangely complicated card, resembling those represented on some old charts, which was to guide our course. It was laid on the deck before the steerer in a rude box, which contained all sorts of odds and ends; during the day it was frequently consulted with an air of great importance, even the little black boy coming occasionally to take a grin at it; and as evening came we were applied to for candles to enlighten our darkness, while our prow was directed over the alarmingly deep waters to Woj. Captain Halil would have been much more at ease among coral reefs than in the open sea.

As luck would have it, after sunset the wind freshened, the sea rose too high to be pleasant to landmen ; the young moon soon disappeared, and in the dark night of the south the deep blue of the sea twinkling with the reflection of the stars seemed to form one mass with the purple firmament above. Strong gusts of wind often sweep down the Gulf of Akabah. To-night we were favoured with several of them ; and a little before midnight our bark was struck by several seas with sufficient violence to knock us out of bed, and to send all the boxes on deck dancing about with no small fracas. Then rose the generally muffled voice of Rais Halil above the blast, the sailors rushed about pulling desperately at the straining ropes ; we had in fine all the accessories at least of a storm, the blast-like whistling of the wind, the tossing and occasional shock of the waves, the noisy manœuvres of the sailors as they rushed about the deck ; the wailing of women or children alone was wanting, and these my Turkish chiboukji, a youth of eighteen or nineteen, undertook to supply. He was lying outside the doorway of our little cabin, and when he felt the shock of the waves in the black night, and heard the loud cries : " Oh ! Sweet, Oh ! Saviour," with which the crew accompanied their exertions to trim the sails, he joined his voice to theirs, and though he had never

before shown any devotional turn, now addressed himself in a long litany to the higher powers, whom he hoped to interest in our safety—Oh Lord! Oh Gracious Protector! O Zeinab! O my lords Hassam and Hasseim, and so on through the whole Mussulman Calendar; vowing also never more to drink wine, and promising to renounce a thousand other favourite peccadilloes, which rose to his memory, in all the terrors of a guilty conscience. No exhortations, no assurances, that he was certainly not destined to be drowned, would calm him, so at last, getting accustomed to the noise, I again dropped to sleep, the sound of his supplication still pursuing me in dreams. With the morning, if the sea became no calmer, daylight dispelled the flutter, I will not say alarm of the crew; and thirty hours after quitting Tor we were in sight of a hill which was recognised as Tobrydah (*Ἰππος ὄρος*), and so discovered that, in the agonies of a night navigation, our Rais had failed in his reckoning, and carried us too much to the left. At a day's march inland from this point is said to be a great plain, from the centre of which rises a single hill, called Marran, from whose base spring seventy-five fountains of sweet water, an incredible number, though the fact be vouched for by several respectable eye-witnesses. We now kept the land in sight, and an hour before

sunset, cast anchor in a creek of a coral island, Na'aman, nearly opposite Dhobah. We had a strong wind in our favour, but one night at sea was all that our crew had bargained for, and we consoled ourselves as we could for the delays we were thus forced to submit to, by the reflection that Admirals Hanno and Nearchus, were not more daring sailors than Captain Halil.

The following day we passed the hills called the Stables of Antar, the robber-hero of Bedawy romance, and before sunset reached Woj, in whose secure creek we anchored for the night. We were immediately boarded by a small boat which brought freshly caught fish for sale; going ashore to pass the time till dusk in a coffee-house built at the water's edge, we were soon surrounded by a circle of soldiers of the small Mograbin garrison stationed here. It is the last port in the territory which acknowledges the authority of the Viceroy of Egypt, and it is already so far from head-quarters that we heard no further mention made of passports. Woj is a fishing village, superior both in the civility of its inhabitants and in the abundance of its market, to most places on this coast. Who would have expected, in so out-of-the-way place, among those Arab fishermen to be accosted at once in French? The speaker was a native of Constantine, who had pro-



bably left his country to avoid the domination of the infidel ; but whatever his feelings towards his French masters may be, he showed himself anxious to be a comfort to us, and not a little proud of the opportunity of displaying the knowledge he had acquired from the unbelievers. A ruinous building which is called the castle, in which the few soldiers are lodged, is the only edifice larger than a hut which Woj can boast of.

About fifteen miles beyond this we sailed between the first coral reefs we had yet seen ; the external one, that on the right, was a very perfect specimen of its kind, the ragged edges which appeared at intervals all round its nearly circular outline, enclosed a shallow sheet of unruffled water, which seemed dyed in some parts with the brightest emerald green, and with a ruby purple in others. Between the two reefs, the sea was as smooth as a pond ; but beyond, at a distance of perhaps three or four miles (the wind blowing very fresh), breakers ran like snow hills on the outer edge, with a continual noise like that of a waterfall. On the mainland we noted the hills of Ral and Safcha, and a lower one, Korkum, which runs into the sea, forming a small promontory. The coast hereabouts is inhabited by Beni Areynat Arabs, whose principal sustenance is derived from fishing. The sea in these parts



abounds in excellent fish, of which they salt great numbers, either for home consumption or to barter for other necessaries. One of their boats came up to us offering fish for grain, this we had not to give, and money they refused to take; so they turned to another vessel, which was following in our wake. This fashion of going to market seems common among the Arabs of this coast; for on another day we were hailed by a party, who offered salted fish in exchange for tobacco. In passing among the shoals to-day I heard coffee ordered "for the Sheich," and when made, a cup was brought to each of us to drink in honour of Sheich Marabut. Burckhardt with the fidelity we have since had so many occasions of admiring, mentions a similar custom, which no doubt dates from the remotest antiquity, originating in sacrifice to the gods or spirits of the sea; and we find in Ptolemy that the island of spirits (*δαίμόνων νῆσος*) is situated somewhere in this neighbourhood. Islamism, like Christianity, has found it often easier to give a new direction to a popular superstition, than to abolish it.

From Korkum, near which we passed the night, under shelter of a reef, our course lay further out to sea, and it was late in the afternoon when we came in sight of two islands, Gebel Libnah and Hassan, behind which we again cast anchor. This

latter island is nearly opposite Haura, and contains a large village of straw huts, a summer settlement of the Joheinah Arabs, who inhabit the opposite coast. It is now entirely deserted, the whole tribe having moved further inland, to profit by the herbage which springs up after the winter rains. The hills on this coast, judging only from their outline, seem to be for the most part primitive; here the general character of the country becomes much more mountainous, presenting lofty ranges, which rise tier above tier in succession, with low hills of sandstone, which our sailors called their children, around their bases. In the background, the most distant was a long range called Abu Ghareir, and further on Gebel Nabt; the conical hills nearer the coast were called Mahar. The next day we passed without stopping at the village of Hodra, and anchored off the low tongue of land Baridi, behind which rises Gebel Radwah, forming a magnificent semicircle of hills. It is the scene of one of those traditions of which traces are to be found in all Semitic religions. The sect of the Shiah asserts, that Mohammed Ebn Hanafyeh, a son of Ali and the true Imam, has retired from the wickedness of the times into its recesses. From his eyes, whose light illuminates the cave wherein he lies concealed, flows a stream of water and honey, a

lion and a tiger on either side guarding the entrance to the cave. From this retreat, he will one day issue forth to put an end to all tyranny and violence, and to fill the world with righteousness.\*

Feb. 6th.—We reached Yambo at an early hour, entering its harbour, which is formed by a spacious nearly circular creek, protected from the sea by an island, El Abbási, on the right, between which and a long line of reefs there is a good passage. It corresponds perfectly to Strabo's Charmonthas (*χαρμονθάς*), with its safe entrance, and hundred stadia of circumference. We spent the day here, walking about its streets and round the walls or sitting in a coffee-shop, unmolested by the

\* Behind the Radwah range lies the country of the Beni Thamud, who, according to Mussulman tradition, were punished for refusing to listen to the prophet Salech. Ptolemy, in contradiction to this, mentions the Thamudites as a tribe still existing in his time. In their country are some ruins or excavations, of which I had often heard from Arab friends in Egypt, and of which I endeavoured to obtain some account in Jidda and in Tayf. All that I could learn was very vague, though one person whom I questioned about the *Modain Salech*, or cities of Salech, said that there are no inscriptions; but in many places eagles carved over the doors. He said that the ruins he spoke of were north of Wuj. Burckhardt mentions these ruins, but did not visit them. I was almost as sorry to be obliged to forego the facilities which the Sherif offered me for visiting these monuments, as to be unable to entertain the idea of travelling through the country to the south. Protected by the Sherif, it would have been easy for me to reach Yemen through countries never visited by Europeans. Istachri mentions Thamudite ruins, whose position in Gebel *Attahalib* does not seem to correspond to those referred to by Burckhardt.

inhabitants, whose reputation for bigotry is such, that at Suez we were strongly advised not to attempt to land in their town. Burckhardt's description is exact, though forty years have not passed without adding to its ruinous condition. No large okels, nor houses of any size are now to be seen, but ruins and dustheaps cover a large portion of its surface; the bazaar is miserable, and the habitations are a mere collection of hovels, whose owners seem reduced to the greatest poverty. No trade is now carried on in this port, and the sailors which it furnishes for most of the vessels trading between Suez, Kosseir and Jidda, have generally settled at the last-named place. Nothing, in fine, here could induce one to suppose that this was the seaport of Medina. The extensive walls are in ruins, and although it is certainly one of the oldest ports in Arabia, we saw no remains of either Roman or Saracenic antiquity, excepting two broken columns, which form the lintel of the Medina gate. This gate is shut every evening, and a guard of regular soldiers is stationed beneath it, both very unnecessary precautions, as the wall on either side has entirely disappeared. The gateway, in itself an ugly enough structure, seems to be placed there only "for the honour of the thing." Yambo, however, ranks with the Turkish authorities as a fortified

city, and boasts six brass guns and howitzers, on which the name of Mohammed Ali is engraved. In the bazaar, I was puzzled by the quantity of thick ropes of hay about four feet long, which were laid out for sale; I learned that this is the way in which the fodder for cattle is generally brought to market in the Hedjaz. The long heavy bludgeons which all the Yambawy carry in their hands seem a necessary article of toilette, without which it would be indecent to appear in the streets; they are seven or eight feet long and as thick as a man's wrist. On the evening of our arrival in Jidda, when several of the crew, who were all Yambo men, went on shore to their families, one of them after an ineffectual attempt to obtain his club, which he had stored away in the little cabin where my companion was already in bed, renounced his intention of leaving the ship that night, saying to one of his comrades, "How can a man go ashore without his cane?" Shall I say that this seems the only article of dress which is absolutely indispensable. The mountains behind Yambo recede a considerable distance from the shore, leaving a broad plain, which in winter is covered with vegetation; drains cut along its surface in every direction conduct the rain-water into reservoirs for the supply of the town.

As we proceeded on our journey, three mountain ranges became visible from the sea; one of them (Nassa) with a double peak, somewhat like a camel saddle; behind it Gebel Eyoub, and a fine range, whose swelling sides were brightly tinted with the colours of the evening sun when we anchored beneath it (Gebel Subeh). We had sailed at a considerable distance from the coast to avoid the coral shoals, and did not see the village of Jar (perhaps the ancient Zaaram, *Zaapdu*), which has a good anchoring place, and, according to our sailors, contains ruins dating from the times of ignorance, that is, before Islam. One is so often led astray by such tales, even in more civilised countries than Arabia, that we did not think it worth while to lose three hours of a good wind with the uncertainty of finding anything to repay the delay. Neither our sailors, nor any one I spoke with in Yambo or Jidda, have any knowledge of a river which empties itself on this coast. The *Bœtius* of the ancients, whose sands were charged with gold, if it ever existed, must have been merely a winter torrent.

Continuing towards Rabegh (the place where the pilgrims coming by sea assume the *ihram*, the Moslem pilgrim's weeds), we find the land near the shore is generally lower, and the hills often affecting a conical form. The distant range is Gebel Ke-

leyah. Off Choleis we passed among pale green shoals of the colour of aquamarina, and then sailing past Gebel Omm el Hableyn, outside an island, El Gawat, we entered by a passage protected by an immense reef, which from Ras Hatfbah extends in a straight line to Jidda. We met this day a sambuk crowded with dervishes, displaying from its poop two silk flags, one red and the other green. As they passed they interrupted their drumming and singing to salute us with loud acclamations. The ship, with its bran-new embroidered flags, was crowded with as many passengers as a Greenwich steamer; their gay dresses, surmounted by white and many-coloured turbans, mingled with the various dervish caps, which have been compared to a tulip-bed in full blow, had all the appearance of a pleasure party. We afterwards learned that this was a party of volunteers proceeding to Constantinople to offer their useless aid to the Sultan. This was the first day of their voyage. They had experienced as yet neither the sea-sickness nor privation which, before long, would probably damp their ardour, or at all events render it less boisterous. The enthusiasm for the cause of Islam is at this moment extreme in the cities of the Hedjaz; and more than one of the pious settlers round the House of God has sold all that he possessed to buy arms



for the equipment of volunteers in the Holy War. France, as well as England, in the interest of their Mussulman subjects, if for no other crime, are entitled to call Russia to a severe reckoning in her unprovoked attack upon Turkey, for this revival of a fanaticism so opposed to the progress of civilisation. However the struggle may terminate, its effects can only be injurious as regards the disposition of the Asiatic moslemin towards their Christian masters: if, as is more than probable, justice and the rights of nations be avenged by the intervention of England and France in the contest, the result will be ascribed only to the ever-victorious arms of the Sultan; should he succumb, it is a Christian power which has inflicted the blow, favoured by the treachery of false allies. England will not have aided him, because she is powerless against the Muscovite, whose name and whose designs are too well known on the northern frontiers of Hindostan, and the blow which strikes Constantinople will be felt in Calcutta.

It was long after sunset when we cast anchor, and notwithstanding our impatience to escape the confinement of our little vessel, we were fain to take patience till the next morning. Jidda affords only a roadstead; the large bay in which it is built being an immense shallow, is difficult at all times,

and during low water impassable even for small open boats. It has a white bottom on which the dark sea-weeds grow in circular patches, giving the water the mottled appearance of a panther's skin. Its colour, as well as its position, lead me to conjecture that Jidda must be the λευκή κόμη of Strabo, whence Ælius Gallus set out on his expedition against the interior of Arabia in the time of Augustus Cæsar, and where the Romans had a garrison.

The whole length of the coast we had followed presents a general character of barrenness, only relieved by a few trees which we saw near Omm el Hableyn; but the variety in the outlines of the mountains, the changing character of the coast, sometimes presenting bluff headlands, sometimes flat receding sands, and the novel appearance of the coral reefs among which we sailed, rendered the voyage far from uninteresting. In my note-book I find almost daily notices of the beauty of the sunsets, which I shall not inflict upon my reader; the brilliancy and harmony of the various shades of red, orange, green, blue, and purple, which the cloudless skies of this climate present, can only be imagined by those who have seen them; to attempt to convey to a reader an idea of their beauty would be like trying to describe some new and delicious perfume.

Though the sun was warm during the three or four hours about noon, the weather during the time we were on Sinai was bitterly cold, the Alpine wind howling incessantly through the ravines, and propelling in its passage clouds of small angular stones. If Sinai was in former times what it is now, and unchanging nature allows us not to doubt it, the sons of Israel may well have yearned after the sun as well as the flesh-pots of Egypt. It is true we are in the month of January, but we are two degrees south of Cairo, and the cold is greater, the aspect of nature is more bleak, than at the same season in the neighbourhood of Naples. That the convent is built 5000 feet above the level of the sea, accounts satisfactorily for all this to a nineteenth century man who looks to his barometer for an explanation of his feelings; but all the learning of the Egyptians had failed to divine the virtue of the hollow glass rod. The men from Goshen had no scientific theory at which to warm their imaginations, and we must not be too much astonished if Beni Israel murmured. At the convent our windows looked into the garden, the only bit of cultivated ground in the hills. Its bare white walls, funereal cypresses, and leafless trees, formed a strange contrast to the luxuriant vegetation we so lately left in Egypt. As I shiveringly drew my

Scotch plaid round me, I began to sympathise with the Jews, and I no longer felt astonished at the discontent so broadly stamped on the faces of the Christian brotherhood.

I have made no attempt to add a new opinion, or to bear witness to the truth of one of the old ones on the subject of the real Sinai. I visited Gebel Musa by the light of tradition, without attempting to form a judgment on its authenticity as the very mountain from which the Law was promulgated in the midst of thunder and lightning. This is a question for the antiquary, not for the man of feeling. The character of the surrounding scenery is in awful harmony with the events described in the Pentateuch, a hundred generations have pilgrimed to this spot, to tread or to gaze upon the ground which is holy, hallowed alike to the Israelite, the Christian, and the Mussulman,—the earliest monument of the Faith of all Time. In visiting such a spot I would ever banish from my mind all those learned hesitations which do not strengthen faith, but destroy the poetry, without which there is no religious feeling.



## CHAPTER IV.

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Jidda—Indian Outcasts—The British Consul—Shipping and Trade—Abyssinian Slaves—The Black Suburb—Etiquette of Incense—Turkish Government—Pashas—Peculations—Mehe-  
met Ali's Rule—Intrigues—England interested in the Hedjar—  
Resources of Arabia.

*February 10th.*—At an early hour we went ashore in search of lodgings, our Mussulman servants remaining on board in charge of the luggage, though they looked piteously disconsolate at their landing in the Holy Land being delayed. Jidda is in so far a foretaste of Mecca, that it abounds in all the dissipation which the piety that goes on pilgrimages always collects round the shrine. Our boat in approaching the shore proceeded in zig-zags, the water being so shallow that there is water for even small boats only in the few channels which the coral has not yet filled up.

Jidda is built along the shore in the form of a long parallelogram, extending almost due north and south. From the sea it has a poor appearance; only a few minarets rise above the houses,

which present a long line of mean buildings. From the sea there is no entrance, except through the shabby irregular courts of the custom-house, which are littered with lazy employés and bales of coffee and gum. Its gate is at the end of a wide street, one side of which is occupied by a palace built by the former Sherif Ghaleb, and is lined on either side by a dark row of coffee-booths, which are filled from morning to night with crowds of idlers, all smoking the nargileh. The bazaar, principally composed of wooden booths, runs almost at right angles to this street, leaving in the centre only a narrow passage, often obstructed by camels and their loads, which they deposit before the entrance of the okels. The okels are all placed in this quarter, rendering it no easy matter to pick one's way through the masses of merchandise around them. The shops are poorly furnished, more than one half of them retail eatables; the rest of them display coarse china, porcelain, or European earthenware; the venerable willow pattern predominant on the English wares; cottons, coarse abayahs, cornelian beads, and rosaries. Two or three shops sell Indian and Syrian silks. The crowd which fills the street forms a most interesting sight, on account of the number of different races whose representatives compose it—Turks, nomad Arabs, Meccans, Persians,

Affghans, Indians, blacks of every shade, with features varying from the Jewish to the negro type. Some of them have already arrived for this year's pilgrimage, and they must be devotees or fanatics, as their bare head, sandalled feet, and the cloth thrown round their loins, and over their shoulders, proclaim. They will not assume a more convenient costume till after completing the pilgrimage, some six months hence. Others are pilgrims of former years, whose choice or inclination, or business has detained them; not a few are refugees from the court revolutions of their native countries; some, perhaps, from the domestic annoyance of jealous houris. Behind the bazaar lies the town, composed of tortuous and narrow streets, in which are a few houses with curiously carved lattices, and beautiful doors of teak; the greater number, though lofty, are externally mean, and in their interior confined and shabby. The town is divided into three quarters, Sham (Syria), Yemen, and Hedjaz, the first being on a higher elevation and more northerly than the others, is considered the most wholesome.

It was here that, directed by the lofty flag-staff, I found the English Consulate and its hospitable tenant, Mr. Cole. Thanks to him we were soon lodged in a somewhat tumble-down tenement next door, which his kindness furnished for us as con-

veniently as travellers could desire, or as Jidda could afford to passing strangers.

Of all the towns I have yet seen in the East, none has so distinctive a physiognomy as Jidda; it is even more oriental than Damascus, though as striking for its ugliness as Damascus for its beauty. A single Greek mercantile house, the keeper of a wine-shop, and an Armenian broker, are the only Christians in the place. The pure Caucasian breed is unrepresented by the Jew, but almost every variety of the sons of Shem and Ham has sent its contingent to form the motley population. A most unpleasant sight to the English eye are the crowds of poor Indians, who litter in the streets like dogs; a dirty mat, a cooking-vessel, a water-jar, and heaps of filthy rags form their household furniture: sometimes a low hovel not much larger than a kennel, is constructed of a mat leaning on sticks against a wall, under which the proprietor creeps at night, or during the heat of mid-day. These Indians are pilgrims who have returned here from Mecca, but being destitute of means to continue their journey live on alms, a life of squalid idleness. Our respect for the liberty of the subject has, I suppose, hitherto prevented the Indian Government from taking means to prevent the annual addition made to this colony of beggars. Such English subjects do little honour



to our<sup>s</sup> name, and there would be no hardship in retaining them at home, where they can always find means of subsistence; the Mussulman law, moreover, does not impose the obligation of making the pilgrimage upon the destitute. Mr. Cole does what he can to alleviate the evil by obtaining passages to India for as many as they can carry by the merchant vessels which sail to Bombay every autumn. In my note-book I find that during the last year he gave free passages to six thousand Indians, so large a number that I almost think I must have committed an error in writing it down. All that he can do, however, only palliates the evil, for the number of families thus established in the streets at this moment are to be counted not by tens but by hundreds. The Indian Government alone can stop it, either by establishing a system of passports which should prevent the emigration, or by requiring from every captain of a vessel which carries pilgrims, the deposit of a sum sufficient to pay for their return, of which he should deliver a certificate to the Consul upon landing his passengers. This would be no novelty, for Englishmen carrying native servants to England are subjected to a similar regulation.

It is difficult here to obtain any statistical information which can be depended upon, as the authorities, who do not understand the drift of such

enquiries, and have tender consciences, fear that they may have reference to their own doings. According to the most probable calculation the number of houses, large and small, may be about 4000, and the population perhaps reaches 20,000. The census taken ten years ago gave 16,000, but this was at the time of the withdrawal of the Egyptians, and the re-establishment of the Sultan's authority, when many persons may have retired to Mecca, who afterwards returned. Of the present population 1500 are Indians, including many of the wealthiest merchants, nearly the whole trade of Jidda being in the hands of British subjects. Besides these there are about five hundred other Indians settled in the different parts along the coast of Arabia, who are all under the jurisdiction of the British Vice-Consulate in Jidda. There are also about twenty Persian merchants, who deal principally in tombac, the leaf smoked in the nargileh, and likewise a Persian Consul in Jidda, who, fortunately for himself and his fellow-subjects, enjoys British protection. The British Consul is, in fact, the authority to whom all Easterns apply, whether they are in reality natives of our Indian dominions, or come from Cashmere, Bokhara, or Persia. His place is therefore no sinecure, and has been rendered more difficult by the lâches of his predecessor, who, arriving at a time

when our relations with the Turkish Government were not so defined as they are now, suffered the authorities to have very much their own way in their treatment of his protégés. Thus, according to old custom, when a forced loan was required of the town, the Indian merchants were forced to contribute a large proportion as their quota. The present Pasha not long since had recourse to this way of filling the treasury. The Indians were sent for and assessed at 2000*l.*; but at the same time the Pasha informed Mr. Cole that the assessment was merely nominal, and made only to induce the other merchants to pay their share, which they would resist if they knew that the Indians were, contrary to established usage, exempted from bearing their part. This, of course, was an unacceptable excuse, and certain circumstances causing a suspicion that it was only put forward to prevent the English Consul from interfering till the money had been obtained, Mr. Cole forbid the merchants to agree, even nominally, to pay anything; at the same time he offered on his own responsibility to procure the Pasha a loan on proper security, if he would state to him in writing, that the money was necessary to maintain the peace of the town. A large body of irregular soldiers had come to demand their pay, which was long in arrear, and the fear that they might sack the

town if not satisfied, was the reason given for demanding the loan.

Whilst on the subject I may be allowed to draw attention to the system, or want of system, which pervades many of our consular establishments in the East. It is evidently desirable that the rank of those officers should be proportionate to the importance of the duties imposed upon them, and it must not be lost sight of that a Consul in the East, in places at a distance from head-quarters, is not merely a commercial agent, but has a very extensive political action. France and England have both sent representatives to Jidda; the Frenchman, who has to protect the person of a single resident subject, being a Consul, while the Englishman, who has the interests of two thousand British subjects to look after, is only a Vice-Consul. On all public occasions, the Frenchman, of course, takes precedence of our representative, not a desirable arrangement in a country where such things are more thought of than in Europe. It will never make the slightest difference in his real influence whether our representative at St. Petersburg be an ambassador, or a simple chargé d'affaires; but an Eastern people, who know that there are two great powers in Frangistan, England and France, and a third, Moskov, whom they know not exactly how to class, will draw

their own conclusions, when they see the Englishman always give way to the Frenchman. Another anomaly in the consular position at Jidda is his not receiving an exequatur from the Porte, but merely a vizirial letter, on the pretext that Jidda is in the Holy Land. We had an opportunity of seeing the practical working of this regulation. The French Consul who, by the way, was also an officer of the Legion of Honour, died; a guard of soldiers was requested of the Pasha to attend the funeral; he sent fifty men without arms, and when these were refused, they returned shouldering their muskets, and in this way ran on before the coffin to the gate of the town, when they drew up, and presented arms, whether to the dead man or to Mr. Cole, I did not know, and then drew off to their barracks. Anything so disgustingly indecent as this funeral I have never witnessed; when remonstrated with on the neglect of the proper courtesies of the grave, the Pasha, after making a dozen unsatisfactory excuses, let drop the remark that, after all, he was not a Consul. The way in which I heard the poor man's death announced in a house I was in, was on a par with the conduct of the authorities—"The French Consul has gone to perdition." Verily, those fellows deserve a drubbing.

Jidda was formerly the entrepôt for the Indian

trade of the whole Turkish empire, and the wealth hence derived rendered its merchants the richest amongst the Sultan's subjects. The traffic is now carried on by the annual arrival of a few vessels; but the movement in the port is considerable, though its anchorage is very insecure. One thousand six hundred small vessels and twenty-five square-rigged ships arrive annually in Jidda; the former, each of about 20 tons burthen, the others of various sizes; but only a few reach 400 tons. Everything is imported, the country furnishing for exportation nothing whatever but salt and rosaries made of the yusser, a submarine plant vulgarly called black coral. Rice and sugar are brought from India; wheat from the Persian Gulf and Egypt; beans, lentils, butter, cheese, and European manufactures from Suez; from Koseir and Sawakin the red kerchiefs worn on the head (kufiehs or samadehs); the woollen cloaks (abbayah) come from Bagdad; a few silks and cotton stuffs from India and Muscat; carpets from Basra; resins and coffee from Yemen. The return to Europe consists in the re-exportation of gums, incense, mother o'pearl, and coffee.

The markets are poorly supplied with a few kinds of fruit and vegetables from Taif, bananas and water melons from Wâdy Fatmeh, dates from Medina and other places in the interior. The beef and mutton

are good ; poultry is very dear ; but the sea affords a most gay abundance of fish which display all the colours of an aviary, and some of them are excellent. Water is scarce and bad, that supplied by the wells is brackish ; what is called good water is drawn from the cisterns and is strongly impregnated with lime. In winter it is not very dear, but as the summer advances it reaches an exorbitant price, the cisterns being private property and a favourite object of speculation. The administrator of a pious foundation, whom I met on his return to Mecca, told me that the establishment being in want of money, he had been forced to go to Jidda to sell the usufruct of a cistern belonging to it, as water for the next three years. It was now nearly empty and he sold it for the price of two hundred dollars, though he told me that if plenty of rain fell, the sale of its water for one year would produce perhaps three times this sum. I may add here that the theory of trade is still only in its infancy ; the discoveries of our political economists not having yet reached Arabia. The ordinary profits, which a merchant expects to realise on a venture, are from forty to fifty per cent. ; a sale on which only twenty per cent. is gained he considers almost equal to a loss.

A branch of commerce, which I have neglected to mention, is the trade in slaves. This is the principal

market for the sale of Abyssinians, of whom great numbers of both sexes are sold in this country, the females being very much sought after in Mecca, and even among the Arabs. Whilst I was here several cargoes were brought in, and I visited the sheds in which they were exposed for sale. The slaves so exposed were boys and girls, about ten to twelve years old, all freshly cleansed and dressed to set off their natural advantages. However melancholy this traffic, I could not help being somewhat amused at the uniformity of the gay toilettes in which the young ladies were decked out, and which they seemed not a little proud of. There were about a dozen in each room, seated on carpets ranged against the wall, their hair braided in a multitude of plaits intermixed with gold thread; a large melayah, checquered blue and red of silk and cotton, enveloped their persons, and served also as a veil; each of them had a pair of gold ear-rings, and a pair of silver bracelets, all of exactly the same pattern. Great care is taken by the dealers that they are not seen until this toilette is completed; for this purpose they are landed at night and conducted to the houses of certain women, whose sole occupation is preparing the toilette of female slaves. Their colour was generally a deep yellow brown. I did not notice among the sixty or seventy who were passed in review, any who



seemed to me to deserve the praise of beauty I have heard ascribed to the Abyssinians. There seemed to be a good number of customers in the establishments I visited. The bargains are conducted in rather a curious manner; the dealer and the purchaser take hold of each other's hands, over which the end of a scarf is then thrown; by a pressure of a joint of one of the fingers the dealer indicates the number of dollars he asks, the other answering in the same way, indicates how much he will give by a pressure on the corresponding finger. This silent bargain is sometimes continued for a long time, often broken off and recommenced, before the price is settled. One might hope that this system was the result of shame at the infamy of the transactions, but I suspect that it is resorted to for the sake of not betraying the price demanded or that offered, so that the merchant may ask a dozen different prices according to the means or the eagerness of his customers. Many slaves are sent from here to Egypt; but they are in general of what is called inferior quality, as high-priced brown slaves are not much esteemed in that country. Here the price of girls varies from 50 to 150 dollars, and sometimes reaches 200; boys fetch from 60 to 120.\*

At the southern extremity of the town, looking to

\* This trade is still (June, 1857) *legal* in the Hedjaz.—ED.

the sea is the castle, which is the residence of the Pasha of Jidda, an officer of the highest rank, according to the red book of the Turkish court; he is not on this account more powerful, his effective authority being confined to very narrow limits. A tolerably well-built wall surrounds the town, having two gates to the sea, and three in the rest of its circumference, one on each side, called the gates of Yemen, Mecca, and Medina; the second rather a picturesque mass with heavy round towers. There is an extensive grain bazaar near this gate, and beyond it is a suburb composed of straw huts, the habitations of negro pilgrims from the interior of Africa, and the resort of all the bad characters of the town. They are grouped on either side of the road to Mecca, the sheds which line the road being chiefly coffee and busa\* shops. Near the gate a continual fair is held under huge parasols of straw, for the sale of fodder for cattle, butter, cheese, gun matches, and other indigenous productions. Groups of idle blacks are all day long to be seen, seated in the shadow of the wall, playing a game which consists in throwing four short sticks into the centre of the circle they form, the direction in which they fall determining the number each marks. Strolling from here towards the Medina gate I one day found

\* A kind of beer.

a party of Indians playing a game at ball, which subtracting the bat, was not unlike cricket. They were regular featured, well built, cheerful looking fellows, and seemed delighted at the interest I took in their game.

At less than a mile from the Medina gate is the tomb of our common mother Eve; it is surmounted by a cupola and surrounded by walls, inclosing a pretty cemetery, in which many of her children lie around her. Judging from the tomb she was a tall woman, about sixty feet without her shoes, but not formed in the proportions of the Venus de Medici; for the centre of the cupola, corresponding with her numbril (if this be not English I hope it is at least a delicate latinism), is placed exactly midway between the head and feet. This circumstance by the way proves the existence of this part in one at least of our first parents, and answers affirmatively a question which gave rise to a useful controversy much agitated by the scholastic disputants of the middle ages.

We visited the town too long after the Haj to find its merchants supplied with many foreign rarities, and from all I learned I suspect that few objects of great price are now brought to Mecca. The diminished devotion among the higher classes, very few of whom think it necessary to make the pilgrimage, and still more the general and increasing poverty of

the East, offer little inducement to the merchant to bring to the great annual fair the costly objects of Indian or Persian luxury. However gay and interesting its streets during the forenoon, Jidda affords no resources for evening amusement. At sunset all is hushed, not a lamp is to be seen in the streets, rarely a marriage procession, or a party preceded by lanterns who are returning from a zikr. The zikr consists in the chaunted repetition of parts of the Koran, and seems to afford amusement to the Arabs; it is the only social dissipation in which they indulge. Our evenings, however, did not pass so heavily as might from this be supposed, for we found an unvarying welcome at the tea-table of our excellent consul, whose knowledge of various parts of Arabia rendered his conversation both instructive and agreeable. Of the hospitality of the Jiddawy we can say little; it seems to be confined to coffee and smoke, with sometimes the addition of sherbets and incense; the last, when offered, is brought at the moment of taking leave. A servant sprinkles rose-water on the hands of each of the company, and is followed by another who carries the incense dish, the smoke of which the visitor receives by opening the folds of his robe and wafting it once or twice with the hand towards the beard. It is not an ungraceful ceremony among the natives, but the European who has

nothing to take hold of but the meagre edges of his coat, and possesses a polished chin little retentive of Sabæan odours, makes rather a droll appearance when he essays it. We went to see several of the principal personages of the place, and among others, two or three houses of Indian merchants. Many of these are wealthy men, and one of them the richest trader in the Hedjaz; but in all their establishments there was that air of careful penury which marks the rigid economy of men whose fortunes have been made from very small beginnings. One of them made me taste for the first, and I hope last, time the beverage prepared from the keshra, the unroasted husks of coffee. It is the favourite preparation of coffee in Yemen, and is used not from motives of economy, for the husk costs the same price as an equal weight of the bean, and gives a smaller quantity of liquor. If introduced into Europe it might find amateurs, but it seemed to me to resemble closely in flavour senna tea.

I have thus rambled about the town longer than the interest of what I have to relate will perhaps justify; and I approach the question of government and finance with some unwillingness. Of the Turkish government I am sorry to write anything which may expose its short-comings; but as it exists in the Hedjaz there is little to say in its favour. The

distance from the capital, the secret opposition which the measures of enlightened ministers encounter, not only from subordinates but even from its highest officers, the embarrassing position in which the Ottoman party has been placed ever since Sultan Mahmoud commenced his reforms, are facts which may be urged in its excuse. Then again it has Russia and Austria on its frontiers,—bad foes and worse friends; fanatical Mussulmen and hostile Greeks within; and the well-meant but often injudicious interference of foreign powers to contend with. But the fact is, that in attempting to impose a Turkish government on Arabia, the present Sultan seeks to accomplish that which the Romans could not effect, and his own ancestor, Sultan Selim, never attempted. Selim was content to be the servant and protector of the Holy Cities; he had garrisons and governors in various places on the coast, but in the interior, the Arabs were left subject to the traditional authority of their Sheichs, whose chief, sometimes a powerless puppet, sometimes a despotic monarch, was the Sherif of Mecca. The Turkish Sultans conferred upon the Sherif an annual pelisse of honour, their names and his were inserted in the Friday prayers; and excepting in respect of certain financial measures regarding the partition of the revenue derived from the customs, this was the

utmost extent of their interference. Mehemet Ali, who was commissioned to chastise the Wahabites, the iconoclasts of Islam, seized and dethroned the reigning Sherif whom he came to assist, and set up in his place another member of his family; at a later epoch a member of another family—his paid and very submissive subjects. Whilst he occupied the Hedjaz with a numerous army this system could be maintained, however questionable its policy, but the moment that the Sultan's direct authority was substituted for his, the unnatural fabric, so opposed to the ideas and habits of the people, fell to pieces. There are at present two co-ordinate powers in the Hedjaz, the Turkish Pasha of Jidda, who is the guardian of the Holy Cities, and the Sherif of Mecca, a lineal descendant of Fatimah, the daughter of the Prophet. The one is a foreigner, appointed by a foreign sovereign; the other an Arab of the noblest blood, the representative of a long line of princes, whose government is in accordance with the feelings of national vanity, that of the Turk being most distasteful to the Arab. Arabia is the only Eastern country, as far as I know, in which the spirit of nationality exists; it would amount to patriotism, did not the narrow prejudices of Arab clannism render it unworthy to be called by so lofty a name.

The personal character of the present Pasha of Jidda, whose dismissal I should add was daily expected, increases the difficulties which the anomalous existence of two equal and constantly conflicting powers must inevitably produce. Though a military man he is of a timorous disposition, which among a people like the Arabs, is a weakness strange and despicable. His love of money, though by birth as well as by office he is a rich man, is carried to an excess of stinginess, which however respectable it might make its possessor in Europe, here, where liberality is regarded as the greatest virtue, only excites the most unbounded contempt. He receives in pay 160 purses (750*l.*) a month, with allowances amounting to 30 purses more; and I need hardly say that no arrears are due to him. To this must be added, the illicit gain which the Pasha shares in with his subordinates, which may be fairly estimated at twice as much more. He has under his jurisdiction four other Pashas: one resident at Medina; the others governors of Hodeidah (Yemen), Massawa and Sawakin. Their authority, like his, hardly extends beyond the walls of the towns they inhabit; their pay is proportionately large and their perquisites not less. I can cite a case of one of the subordinate Pashas, who being recalled after two years' misgovernment, acknowledged at Aden that he



was returning to Constantinople with 40,000*l.* of "savings" (I must write it, the sum is so monstrous), forty thousand pounds savings out of an annual pay of 5000*l.* or 6000*l.* According to official returns, the military establishment amounts to 13,000 men; of these more than one-half are regulars, but, in fact, the total number of soldiers does not much exceed 8000 men. This number is evidently too great or too small; too great, if the two Holy Cities and the two or three towns which are really under the Sultan's sway, and inhabited by the most peaceful trading people in the world, be considered as their only charge; too small, if we may judge from the state of the open country, where not a Turk can show himself. There are 700 Arnaouts occupying five stations, on the road between Mecca and Medina—a distance of about 240 miles,—and yet the journey between the two cities is attended with the greatest danger. The great pilgrim caravan was obliged to follow a circuitous and difficult route this very year; and another, which persisted in travelling along the ordinary road, was stopped and pillaged with a considerable loss of life.

The financial and administrative situation is deplorable; the Arabs pay no taxes and acknowledge no law but that of their Sheichs; the inhabitants of the towns are still exposed to the

vexations of the old system, for the tanzimat has never been introduced here ; no mejlis is established, even in Jidda, where there are so many wealthy merchants ; and the absolute want of money to carry on the government, has given rise to a system of speculation new in this country, and unequalled anywhere, perhaps, unless in Egypt. Everything is paid for, even the water for the barracks, in government paper, called sergy, which is bought up by the Pasha and the higher authorities at a gain of about 60 in the 100. The director of the customs, who has been here a year and a half at a salary of 12*l.* a-month, is one of the purchasers of these notes, and has already amassed 8000 dollars. The expenditure of the government, in which considerable reductions have been made of late, amounts to 46,000 purses, the income derived from the country to about 10,000, collected nearly as follows: the customs yield at the various ports, 8000 purses ; the monopoly of salt, 250 purses ; charges for brokerage, &c., 400 ; the tax upon boats, 200 ; together with these there are some other trifling sources of revenue. The revenue derived from the port of Jidda was stated in the last government returns at 3000 purses, though it really amounts to 7000 or 8000, a sum entirely raised from British ships coming from India or the Persian Gulf ; those from

Turkish and Egyptian ports bring certificates of the customs having been paid there,—certificates often granted on the payment of one-third or one-half of the proper duties,—whereby they are enabled to land their cargoes duty free. British ships pay 5 per cent, duty; and in addition to this, an extra sum is charged on certain kinds of goods, under the name of *'awad*, and a further imposition under the name of weighing dues. These being contrary to treaty, the British Consul has protested against their being exacted, and by this time orders are probably given to that effect at Constantinople. To raise this sum, there are, besides a director of customs, four head clerks, with a proportionate array of subordinates; and every other branch of the administration is organised on the same scale. To supply the enormous deficit which results from this statement, 21,000 purses of the Egyptian tribute are assigned to the Hedjaz; besides the value of 9000 purses in grain and beans, intended principally for the rations of the troops, which are sent from Egypt and charged to the account of the tribute. It is on the 21,000 purses drawn from Egypt that the traffic in sergy is principally based. There is still an annual deficiency of 15,000 or 16,000 purses to be added to a debt which, during the last ten years, has reached a sum of 84,000 purses.

At no period of the Turkish rule has the government in the Hedjaz ever paid its expenses; even under the caliphs large sums were regularly sent to it by the sovereign, not indeed for the expenses of administration, but to purchase the good-will of the powerful chieftains. In Mehemet Ali's time, it is said that he commanded the obedience and raised taxes from 615,935 fighting men, probably an exaggerated statement; but the number may really be two-thirds of this. From these he contrived to raise a revenue of 80,000 purses, which are now worth 400,000*l.*, but at that time were worth much more. This sum, however, did not cover his expenditure, as he carried on long and expensive military operations, conducted with his usual recklessness of cost; and his establishment, up to the time when he relinquished Arabia to the Porte, was maintained on a war footing.

It may seem strange that the Sultan should have taken from Mehemet Ali the occupation of a country, which is so burthensome to his treasury; but in resuming it, he was not only punishing a rebel who had made use of the influence which his authority over the Holy Cities gave him, to combat his sovereign with the dangerous weapons of popular and religious opinion, but he was in some sort disarming him. The possession of Hedjaz, the cradle of

religion, has always been regarded as the sign of universal dominion over Mussulmans in every part of the world; and of whatever country they may be subjects, the orthodox Sunny look up to the Sultani of Stamboul as possessing something more than the rights of a religious head. He is looked upon very much in the light in which the Roman Emperor was regarded during the middle ages by a certain class of jurists. I am tempted to cite a very recent fact, as a proof of the consideration he enjoys in our Indian dominions. It is not long since, the chief of a religious sect or confraternity in Malabar was exiled by the Indian government for exciting disturbances in the country. He proceeded to the Porte, where his religious character obtained him a distinguished reception. He was, by the Sultan, recommended to the English ambassador, who gave him (of course in entire ignorance of his antecedents), a passport and strong letters of recommendation to all English authorities. At Cairo he was received with every sort of honour, and his indignation was only equalled by his surprise at finding the vice-consul here venture to impede his return to India. The consul, who is also agent of the Indian government, was acquainted with the circumstances under which he had left his country, and at once conjectured that the letters had been

surreptitiously obtained from the ambassador. The refusal to suffer him to continue his journey made a great noise, not only in the Hedjaz, but even in Egypt, where I heard the story. Had he been allowed to return to India, of course he and his fellow Mussulmen would have believed, that the Sultan had ordered the ambassador to give him a passport; and the Osmanli's favorite idea, that the Sultan is Lord Paramount of the world and has intrusted the government of outlying or useless provinces, England or France for instance, to subject kings, would have found its way into our own territories. In all dealings with Orientals, it is absolutely necessary to pay the most constant attention to trifling acts and words; with the cunning of children, however fawning their politeness, they are always on the watch to surprise some verbal concession, which may console their pride for the humble position to which their feebleness has reduced them, or may serve as the logical scaffolding on which to build some fresh pretension.

Universal discontent pervades all classes of the population; the native Arabs, jealous of Turkish domination, attached to the Sherif (though he is not personally popular), by considerations of nationality, do more than complain, they refuse every mark of obedience, except in their prayers. The Turks, who

come here only to gather spoil, are not less clamorous because so long a time has elapsed since the deficiency in the revenues has been made good by the central government. And there is an Egyptian party, also, which adds its influence to foment all these discontents, in the hope that the Porte may be induced to relieve itself of this charge on its diminished funds, by resigning into the hands of the Viceroy of Egypt a territory, which at present is a serious incumbrance to its governors, but from which his fiscal talents would soon extract a considerable revenue. The Viceroy is well aware of the great resources which the Hedjaz, generally reputed so poor, possesses; and has long been intriguing in Constantinople to obtain its government, either for himself or his son. Instead of sending money to, he would, in a few years, draw a surplus revenue from the country; but it is with larger views than the wish to increase by an insignificant sum his enormous wealth, that he is so desirous of obtaining this country. He would then become master of both shores of the Arabian Gulf in more than two-thirds of its length; which, added to the possession of Massawa, would increase his facilities for attacking Abyssinia, long a favourite project with his grandfather. In this view he loses no opportunity of conciliating the Arabs; his youngest son has been

sent to be educated in an Arab tribe, he distributes large sums in presents to the more powerful of their Sheichs, and has bought many adherents in Mecca itself. Egypt is looked upon by the proud and lazy Meccawy as the land of plenty, from which they may draw inexhaustible supplies; they know its sovereign to be personally the richest in the world; and they flatter themselves that if he were master of the Hedjaz, a great portion of his good things would be converted to their benefit. The taxes which Mehemet Ali imposed upon the country did not affect the inhabitants of the Holy Cities, who are perfectly indifferent as to what may befall the Arab population, from whom they differ in their origin, their servility, and their vices.

England has no little interest in this question. Her Indian provinces carry on an extensive trade with the Hedjaz, and she has twenty-five millions of subjects, who look with pious veneration to the Holy Cities, and furnish some thousands of pilgrims annually to their shrines. On account of the insecurity of the country, and the exactions and malversations of the governors affecting these, she has a right to take a special interest in, and to exercise a strict surveillance over, the Hedjaz. There is one of the dependencies of the Pashalic which ought not to be overlooked, both on account of what it is in



the hands of the Turks, a mere entrepôt of slaves, and what it might become under another government. The island of Massawa, and the small town of Hakiko on the coast opposite to it are under a Turkish Pasha, who has the title of Governor of Abyssinia, over which the Sultan claims a nominal sovereignty of about the same value as the kingdom of Jerusalem which figures on the coins of Austria, Naples, and Sardinia. As its possession yields him nothing, it serves no purpose but that of a slave-market, while his government is so feeble that it not only can exercise no influence as mediator between the petty chiefs who have parcelled Abyssinia among themselves, and who are continually at war with each other, but its very existence is continually threatened by attacks of the natives, whom he has to buy off. Could the Sultan be induced to cede this possession to England it would be well worth while to pay for it a round sum ; in European hands it would become the outlet for all the rich productions of a country, whose natural wealth is as yet hardly explored, and which promises large supplies of raw material both for the Indian and European markets. Besides this, it would open a door to civilisation which, if unaccompanied by ideas of religious propagandism, the natives of the interior are far from averse to receiving.

In a commercial point of view, the condition of the Hedjaz deserves consideration. As an agricultural country it never can supply its wants; for corn it must always be in a great measure dependant on Egypt or India; but its pastoral wealth is great, and it has resources which have never yet been suspected, at least which in modern times have been neglected. Yellow sulphur of excellent quality is found near Zobeydah, probably the same formation as that which has been for some years successfully worked on the opposite coast of Egypt; mineral copper is found near Gonfoda, and lead at a place one hour inland, and about four hours above Yambou. The interior of Arabia has never been explored; from the natives I learned that it contains large tracts of fertile and thickly inhabited territory. Were a regular government established, not, perhaps, so difficult an enterprise as it may seem, an immense market for many European productions would be opened. In a country where anarchy reigns men are contented with the mere necessities of life: there is then no time to feel, nor means to satisfy the wants, which peace and the refinement which accompanies it create.

I have purposely reserved for a separate chapter all mention of the Sherif, intending to preface it by a few words on the origin and nature of his authority.



## CHAPTER V.

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Mohammed—Islam—The Sherif.

TAYY, *February 19th.*—I find myself obliged, in speaking of his descendants, to write a few lines concerning Mohammed and his doctrines; I therefore take the liberty of addressing my reader in a few prefatory words, *ad captandam benevolentiam*, that is to say, to turn aside the virtuous indignation he may be tempted to waste upon me, should he think that I, a Christian, speak too well of Islam or its founder.

To set his mind and my own at rest on this subject, I therefore profess that in common with all my fellow men, Christians, Jews, Turks, infidels and heretics, I have no doubt that all who do not think on religious questions exactly according to the tenets professed on this nineteenth day of February, eighteen hundred and fifty-four, by the holders of the only orthodox doctrine, (of course my own) are inevitably doomed to eternal perdition. But as the

Muggletonians, or the Brownists, or the children of the new Jerusalem, or any other more numerous "denomination" of Christians, have equally arrived at this comfortable conviction regarding the future destiny of the entire human family beyond the narrow pale within which they so victoriously resist the assaults of the Evil One, and yet in ordinary conversation treat with a polite indulgence the remaining Christian sects; so I hope they will not be offended or think less well of me if, mentally devoting the whole Mussulman world to the abyss which yawns for them and so many others, I yet treat their Prophet and his religion with the seeming charity which in polite society at the present day covers all theological eccentricities: hugging myself the while with the thought that they are not the less certainly doomed to eat much dirt in the end. Having thus propounded the largeness of my own ideas of tolerance and put myself, as I hope, beyond the reach of all ill-natured criticism, I venture to sum up in the briefest terms a few points concerning the life of Mohammed, whose character, apart from the theological question of his pretended mission, seems to have been, if not with wilful piety, misrepresented by the greater number of his Christian biographers, at least greatly misunderstood.

It is my intention neither to accuse, nor abuse,

nor excuse the Arabian prophet as a teacher of error, but to call attention to the great benefits which he conferred upon his country; to the comparatively pure religion which he introduced among his people; and this without saying a word of the splendid empire which his genius and that of his successors founded with such amazing rapidity. If my reader be curious in points of doctrine, and have a taste for light reading, let him turn to Maracci, it is only two volumes in folio, where he will find a refutation of Islamism (and of several other *isms* which he treats by the way) along with the text, and a very fair translation of the Koran. If he prefer lucubrations seasoned with a pleasant zest of bitter, I can conscientiously recommend the English life of Mohammed by Prideaux, who has contrived to combine a wonderful amount of gall with a still fuller measure of ignorance. The Germans, Weil, Döllinger, and Sprenger may be consulted by the few who seek to form a judgment on materials collected from ancient authorities.

When the dread of Mussulman arms shook Europe to its centre and the hosts of the Crusaders covered the plains of Asia, whence few returned to tell the tale of their losses and their sterile victories, Mahounde was regarded by the terrified devout as a sort of incarnate Satan; nearer our own times

when the Turkish horsetails swept Hungary and threatened Germany and Italy, it was the fashion to apostrophise him by the use of such hard names as Arch-Impostor and Antichrist; but now that the temporal power of Islam is tottering, that it looks for support to the Christian nations it once menaced, we may be allowed to consider its author and destinies with greater calmness.

The condition of the Jews in the time of the Prophet Moses and that of the Arabs in the time of Mohammed present some coincidences, the more striking as it is impossible they can have occurred to him or any of his contemporaries in those uncritical times. To understand them we must go back to a still remoter date, when we shall find that the common ancestor of the Jews and some tribes of the Arabs, the patriarch Abraham or Ibrahim (though retaining in its primitive purity the doctrine of the unity of God from which his neighbours had fallen away) never hesitated to worship in the same places with them. The consecrated tree, the well, the high places in the mountains were his as well as their resort to sacrifice. The Canaanites still retained the idea of a Highest God, but attracted by the beauty of external nature they had begun to worship Him in His manifestations. It is A. W. Schlegel who remarks, that the deeper we go into

the history of former times, the more convincing become the proofs that all idolatry was originally a worship of the true God, gradually obscured by the personification of his attributes or workings. Thus in those early times, something not very unlike what existed in Arabia in the sixth century was found in Palestine, for Melchisedeck appears as the priest of the Most High God (El eljon) the very expression (allah ta'allah) used by the Arabs. But the most curious part of the parallel is the similarity of the condition of the Jews at the time of their deliverance from the land of bondage, with that of the Arabs when Mohammed proclaimed his mission, and the striking resemblance in the way in which the Hebrew and Arab legislators acted. The Jews in their long residence of four centuries in Egypt, being perhaps the more easily seduced by the tradition of the superstitions which had surrounded their fathers in their lost country, had adopted the ideas of the Hyksos, a race of the same origin as themselves, among whom they were settled. In the strange land they drew near to their fellow exiles and joined them in their worship of personifications of the destroying and conservative principles worshipped in Canaan. These were old, deeply-rooted feelings, sanctioned in some sort by the practice of their fathers, and Moses in yielding to them so far as to adopt a part of the

Phœnician ritual sought only to wean his people from their recent idolatry and to preserve them from it in future.\*

The burning bush, the fire continually burning on the altar, the ark, the consecration of the first-born, circumcision, a compromise for the offering made to Moloch or Adonis, may be cited in proof of this. The very title of the Lord of Hosts points to such an origin. In one respect the Hebrew was less bold than the Arab law-giver; his language is more in conformity with popular feelings than Mohammed's; when he invites them to the worship of the One God of Heaven and Earth, it is because he is the God of *their* fathers, of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, *thy* God O Israel! This teaching may be traced in the Mosaic Books, where Elohim is the title of God as the God of the Nations, while Jahva always denotes the God of the Israelites; and it still makes itself felt after three thousand years, in the belief of the Jews, whose God is their own God, as they are His people, while the Arabs' Allah is the God of the universe, alike of the true believer and of the infidel. But Moses undertook like Mohammed not a development of a pure religion from the fables by which it was obscured, but a restoration of the original faith of the patriarchs;

\* See Movers. *The Phœniciana*. Berlin, 1849.



yet he as well as the Arab found himself obliged to adopt in the service of the true God certain pagan ceremonies.

The accidents of common origin and similarity of circumstances, may account for some resemblances between the Mosaic revelation and the scheme of Mohammedanism, but not for all. It can hardly be doubted that there were early traditions of solemn truths lingering among the Arabs, mingled with the supernatural machinery which we find reproduced in the Koran. The Jews had long since, probably after the fall of Jerusalem, possibly at the time of the captivity, established powerful colonies in various parts of Arabia. Three powerful tribes, Arabs in all their habits, lived round Medina; and Chaibar principally if not entirely belonged to them. They were numerous in all parts of Arabia, and swarmed in Yemen, one of whose kings had in the sixth century, and after embracing their religion, commenced a fierce persecution against the Christians, so as to occasion an invasion from Abyssinia in their defence. Wherever they were established in numbers they were not long in acquiring an ascendancy, which they exercised with little forbearance over the people of the country; when few, they made their presence felt among rich and poor, by arts which the ignorance of those times branded with the unpopular

name of usury. Of Jewish superstitions, such as they existed at that time and in those countries, we have a minute and degrading description in the Talmud.\*

The great mass of the inhabitants of Arabia had long been sunk in the most gross superstitions, worshipping stocks, or stones, or the heavenly Host; the remainder were followers of the Nestorian sect, described by the Fathers of the church as one of the most corrupt of Christian heresies. No regular government can be said to have existed in the Peninsula, blood-feuds decimated the population, commerce was neglected (among such a people it could not flourish), and as a natural consequence the hardest poverty weighed upon all classes, often amounting to long and wide-spread famine. The birth of a female child was mourned as a calamity, and the unfortunate infant was not unfrequently made away with; while, to complete the picture, it

\* The Jews were certainly settled in considerable numbers in Arabia about 300 B.C., and perhaps if Samhoudy can be trusted, as early as the capture of Jerusalem by Nabuchodonosar. He calls them Karaites. About the time of the Prophet they formed several small, but warlike, communities in Northern Arabia. Chaibar and Yambo belonged to them. They exercised a great influence on the Prophet's destiny by their alliance with the Chazraji, the powerful inhabitants of Yathreb (Medina), who learned from them the legend of the expected Messiah, and were thus prepared to receive Mohammed as such.

must be added, that in the barbarous rites of more than one of their idols human blood was shed.

A family claiming to be descended from Ishmaël, had for many generations exercised the functions of a sort of priesthood in the temple of Mecca, the common resort of pilgrims from all the tribes of Arabia. In the fourth or fifth century, Kussai, the head of this house, succeeded in uniting the temporal to the spiritual power, which though subsequently divided both continued in the hands of princes of his house. From this stock, the noblest in Arabia, where the pride of birth has been immemorially rooted, Mohammed the Prophet sprung. He was in the fifth descent from Kussai, and he could count his lineage from father to son from Adnan, a prince who lived in the second century before the Christian era. No one has called his descent in question, and he himself rebuked the vain genealogies which pretended to trace his family from patriarchal times.

Mohammed was born A.D. 571, and his father died about the same time, leaving him to the guardianship of his grandfather, but with no other fortune than a house, five camels, a few sheep, and an Abyssinian slave. Reared in the precincts of the Ka'aba, amid the intrigues and quarrels with which its guardians mocked its pretended sanctity, Mohammed's strong sense revolted from the heathenism which surrounded

him, and fastened on the sublime doctrine of the Unity, of which he had heard something from his Jewish and Christian contemporaries. To the meditation of this great truth he devoted the days and nights of his youth; in the secluded recesses of the hills, in fasting and solitude he sought to fathom its immensity; the work was worthy of a life, and he proposed to himself its propagation. In his ardent contemplation of heavenly things he neglected the management of the large fortune which his wife Khadija had brought him, and which had prospered in his hands when he was only her steward; he preferred the society of his thoughts to the company of his countrymen, who regarded him as the most upright of his noble race. As a child he had been subject to epileptic fits, which his nurse, according to the superstition still prevalent in the East, ascribed to the influence of evil spirits. When alone in a cave of Mount Charra, abstinence and mental anxiety brought on a renewal of the attacks; and on his recovery he thought he had seen a vision, but he was troubled, fearing it might be a suggestion of an evil spirit. He confided his thoughts and fears to his wife, and to her cousin Waraka,\* a baptised Jew,

\* Waraka's relation to Mohammed is most important. It explains, far better than the stories of his interviews with monks, his knowledge of Christian and Jewish tradition; and it at the same

by whom as well as by the words of the angel in another vision, he was encouraged to believe in his own inspiration. He was at this time forty years old. Of the inward struggle he underwent at this time several passages in the Koran give proof. He was without learning; he calls himself 'the unlettered Prophet;' but the fiery eloquence inspired by his deep convictions might easily persuade himself, as it undoubtedly persuaded his followers, that his words proceeded from direct revelation.

It has perhaps occurred to some of my readers, when highly excited by a question of politics, or religion, or art, to express himself with an energetic fluency at which he has been himself inwardly surprised; and thus it may have been with Mohammed. Grant this to have been the case, add to the testimony of a good conscience, the influence of a highly poetic temperament on a sickly constitution,

time offers a satisfactory way of accounting for the view he took of the two religions. Waraka, born a Jew, though related to Khadija, had renounced this religion and embraced some form of Christianity, with which he seems to have become equally dissatisfied. It must have been from him that Mohammed learned the accusation he brought against the Jews—of deifying Esdras, which becomes curious, as the latest school of Biblical Exegesis seems to regard Esdras as the author of the Pentateuch, a supposition not contrary to the words of the Gospel and the language of the earliest Christian church, and hardly more shocking to common sense than the received opinion which makes the Hebrew legislator write the account of his own death.

and it will not be difficult to account for the undeviating faith which he seems to have had in himself.

For four or five years he communicated the revelations he received only to his nearest friends, and when, in obedience to a supposed command from the archangel, he prepared at length to announce his mission publicly, he suffered so much from the apprehension of the ridicule and persecutions which seemed inevitable, that his appearance became that of a sick man. He had not exaggerated to himself the danger of his mission, and so violent was the animosity of his relations, the Koreish, who ruled in Mecca, that he recommended his few followers to take refuge with the Christian Najash of Abyssinia. His perseverance in these circumstances is a strong argument of his sincerity, for he was not naturally courageous.\*

He continued in Mecca protected from personal violence by his uncle Abu Taleb, the father of Ali,

\* He was not *actively* courageous. He wore a double shirt of mail when he went to battle, and carefully abstained from mingling in the fray. He is only once related to have drawn his sword. On the other hand, he had great moral courage. Once, sleeping on the sand, he was surprised by his enemy Duthur, who, raising his drawn sword over his head, woke him with the words, "Who will now protect thee against me?" "God," said the Prophet. The Arab, in his astonishment at such confidence, let his sword fall; and Mohammed, quickly seizing it, started up, crying out, "And now who shall protect *thee* against *me*?" Duthur was silent: the Prophet let him go, and he departed a Mussulman.

who, however, was not able for long to ensure his safety in the town, and sent him to a fortified castle near Mecca, where he spent three years. At the end of this time, in the tenth year of his preaching, Abu Taleb died (unconverted), and Mohammed, obliged to fly, sought refuge among his relations at Tayf, who not only refused to receive him, but sent out their women and children to insult and stone him. He then turned back towards Mecca, and now on the journey he had two visions which inspired him with fresh courage. In the one, the genii seemed to do him homage; and in the other, he dreamed that he was carried to Jerusalem—the foundation of the tradition of the night journey to heaven, which however there is not the least evidence to show originated in its present shape with him. We have many internal proofs in the Mecca Suras of the Koran, that Mohammed really believed himself to be inspired, but there are writers who, acknowledging this to be true in the early period of his mission, find in the later revelations proof that he had ceased to believe in himself and had become an impostor. This they deduce from the evident connection of his revelations with the events of the day. But if his revelations were dreams, we know that according to the habit of the body, dreams are more or less connected with our waking thoughts.

On the other hand we may ask what is the meaning of inspiration? If it be defined as the action of the Divine Spirit on the human faculties, it is evident that a man who has once persuaded himself that he is under this influence, will be inclined to ascribe all his more vivid thoughts to this source.

I have dwelt thus long on the early part of the prophet's life, because I think that commonly he does not receive justice. I cannot regard him as a common or even as an uncommon impostor; his very errors and contradictions seem to me the proof of his sincerity. His reverence for antiquity, his profession of restoring the religion of his fathers, the depth of his convictions, would naturally lead him to declare himself the last of the prophets, the complement of revelation, the light which should arise from the Paran hills as foretold in the Torah, the comforter promised by the Messiah in the Gospel. His words being as he asserted, and as I have said not improbably believed, those of the Divinity itself transmitted through his mouth, were of course infallible, for without this claim no religion can be founded or exist. No body of doctrines has ever been given to mankind which its propounder has not endeavoured thus to sanction. Every church which pretends to the character of a supernatural society, as Hooker defines it, must, both in words



and acts, proclaim its infallibility. Neither wealth nor the moral excellencies of its members will replace the unity of dogma, which can be based only on this claim, and which alone forms the bond of spiritual union. Doctrinal differences could not exist in the East; Orientals could never be brought to understand any comprehensive vagueness of creed; the most dreamy of mortals, they require every thing they are called upon to believe to be strictly defined; not content with unity in necessary things, they even refuse to accept liberty in doubtful ones. Their faith, as their government, to be respected must be despotic.

Mohammed's genius was eminently oriental, his religion was admirably adapted to the state of Arabia in his time. "There is only one God, Mohammed is his prophet: believe his words, accept his faith, or resist his arms if you can." He offers, he can imagine no other alternative; he has held communion with God, his words must therefore be implicitly received. In acting thus he occupied the only ground on which he could build a religion, the only ground on which he could justify even to himself his convictions. The presence of Jews and Christians had probably created an intellectual ferment which prepared the way for his mission, the crowd of prophets who attempted to rival him prove

the superiority of his genius or the greater fervour of his faith. He professed to perform no miracles, "I am sent not to work miracles but to bring you the revelation of God;" none of the traditions which ascribe them to him, though accepted at the present day by the ignorance of all Mussulmans excepting the Wahaby, date earlier than from the close of the second century after his death; and his good sense, if not his sincerity, would no doubt have scouted such puerilities.

His private life was in many respects worthy of admiration. He possessed a wonderful equanimity of temper, the swelling of a vein in his forehead being the only sign of displeasure he ever showed. His power was never used for personal indulgence; he practised in secret many acts of austerity, fasting with great rigour; his daily life was frugally abstemious, and his generosity unbounded. His biographers on the authority of his servant, record a hundred instances of his humility, his liberality, his placability; how many times he tied a stone round his middle to still the cravings of hunger, how he forgave his enemies, how he lighted the widow's fire, how he loved to play with the young, how graciously he jested with his friends. He prayed fifty times every day. On the other hand, he indulged perhaps beyond measure in what he con-

sidered the permitted pleasures of the senses,—the use of perfumes and the society of women; but, when compared with patriarchal times, his sensual excesses may admit of some excuse. His law set a limit to the number of wives permitted to his followers, and even his own harem which contained at his death nine wives, the greatest blot in his character according to our standard, was perhaps only thus augmented in hopes of having a male child. We must remember his fidelity to Khadija so long as she lived. At all events his establishment was modest when compared with the domestic circle of St. David, king and prophet, or the three hundred wives and innumerable concubines of Solomon the Wise.

If ambitious of power, the noblest of the vices, he was not greedy of money; at his death he left nothing to his daughter but the modest inheritance of her mother; his treasury was empty, and his wardrobe contained only a single cloak. He never deviated from the primitive simplicity of his habits, and the only act of personal vanity recorded of him was the exchanging his iron seal-ring for a silver one, as more becoming the dignity of his mission. In his life Mohammed showed himself practically humane, honest, and disinterested: his death proved the sincerity of his convictions. If we judge him by his aim, the social and religious reform of

his country, we cannot deny that few better men have lived ; if we judge him as the world judges, by his success, we must acknowledge him to have been one of the greatest. For 1200 years a fourth of mankind has been ruled by his voice. His career in its outset was the revolt of a noble nature against a coarse and cruel polytheism ; his wonderful success might well persuade him that he was indeed the chosen of heaven, and the calmness of his death proclaimed the convictions and sealed the doctrine of his life. He must be a man of a sterner theology than I care to profess, who can read unmoved the simple chronicle of his death-bed. On that last Monday,—it had always been his fortunate day,—he lay turned to the wall, wrapped up in a black cloak, and covering his head, to conceal from those dear to him the workings of agony on his face. Before the final struggle, lifting up his voice he exclaimed, “ May God be far from those who make the tombs of His servants places of prayer ! ” The very last words he was heard to utter as he expired, as if in answer to an unseen visitor, were, “ In the company of the blest on high.”

Such were the last aspirations of the Meccan Prophet, whose genius I confess seems to me to be comparable only to that of Socrates. His faults, his good qualities, his weaknesses, and his enthusi-

astic strength, are alike those of his race; and the impartial student may find in our own sacred volumes much to throw light upon the peculiarities of his character. The Semitic mind is eminently objective. It is tenacious and insensible to refined reasoning, as fitted the race which was destined to be the depository of the monotheistic religion. Its ideas of right and wrong differ widely from ours. The divine founder of our Christianity on which these are based, and his first disciples, belonged, indeed to this stock, but his teaching was embraced not by a people of the Semitic group, but by European nations already far advanced in the civilisation and philosophical research for which the Semitic genius is unfit. St. David, in his life and actions, presents contrasts more extraordinary, if judged by our European Christian standard of right and wrong, than Mohammed, yet these were no blots in the eyes of his contemporaries, and stranger still, are regarded with tolerance or expounded into prophetic types by us. If we judge the history of the Jewish people by the rules which we apply to ourselves, neglecting the consideration both of its origin and its vocation (the preparing the way for the Christian form of monotheism), we shall find ourselves only too often bound to condemn those whom religion commands us to revere. Jacob will seem to

have driven an unfair, and therefore invalid, bargain with Esau; Saul must be preferred to Samuel; we must approve the conduct of the kings, and condemn the influence of the prophets; in the Samaritans we must applaud the representatives of liberal ideas, in the Jews we shall see only narrow-mindedness and bigotry; even Antiochus in such a trial will be absolved at the expense of the heroic Maccabees. If we judge the Meccan by the same rules which we fairly apply to the Hebrews, his most doubtful actions will be accounted for; we shall easily understand how the failings and faults, which we discover, appeared neither to himself nor to his followers to weaken his claim to be the prophet of the Most High.

But this is the standard by which to judge the man, not the religion which he taught. His system betrays all the weaknesses from which his life was in great part exempt. Yet the vitality which he had infused into it was wonderful, for it was long before all the good which it contained was exhausted,—nay, at the present day somewhat still remains. Man, whose intellect as well as his life is but a span, cannot legislate for futurity,—once only has a voice been heard in this world whose precepts were for all time. This natural short-sightedness is peculiarly conspicuous in Mohammed, from its contrast with the nobleness of his aims and their marvellous

success. He could not even conceive any condition of society other than the primitive one in which he lived, and his precepts are only adapted for this. He feared the unsteady character of his people, and in his anxiety to bind them down on every side he made no provision for accommodating his law to altered circumstances. He left a religion which his death reduced to a state of petrification, hard, incapable of expansion, though, as we sometimes find in nature, a precious drop of water is inclosed in its heart.

The system which he inaugurated, professed to be a restoration of the patriarchal religion of old, as revealed to Adam, Noah, Abraham, and Moses. The old prophets were honoured by him as prophets, and our blessed Lord was in his eyes as well as in ours, the Messiah. He professed to teach nothing new, to preach only the eternal truth which God had revealed to the crowd of witnesses whom he had sent before him, to remove the tinsel with which the fine gold of the Tabernacle was overlaid and to recall men to the knowledge of the one Creator, which he had found veiled in the idolatrous myths of his countrymen, or disfigured by the heresies of the Nestorians and the superstitions of the Jews. His creed may be summed up in three words,—God, Revelation, Judgment! We may put it thus in the

form of a symbol, "I believe in one God all powerful and merciful, in his prophets whom he has sent to reveal his will of whom Mohammed is the chief and the seal, in his angels, who are the ministers of his will; I believe in the resurrection of the dead, and the rewards and punishments of a future life." The Koran contains no other doctrine but this. It recognises neither original sin nor predestination. The fall, according to the Koran, produced only its natural consequences; it was the result of selfish indulgence, and this must ever produce dissension, with malice and hatred in its train. At the fall the Divine grace was withdrawn, and man was left exposed to the temptations of Satan, but his will was still free.

In the simplicity of his dogma the Prophet might be justified in thinking that he had a safeguard against all danger of religious dissensions, and, indeed, it required intellects of Oriental subtilty to evoke the host of idle questions which have assumed importance from the bitterness of party animosity, and have distracted the Mussulman world. He left behind him no work but the Koran, a sublime rhapsody, which his followers believe to have been written by God himself; the most perfect specimen of Arabic eloquence, abounding in passages worthy of the book of Job, and in incoherences which betray his sole



claim to its authorship. It professes to contain the whole code of human life, not only dogma and morality, but also every law, ceremonial, criminal, civil, or commercial; and herein lies the fatal germ of destruction.

Though Islam is a ceremonial law, Mohammed was so opposed to all idea of an intermediary, or intercessor, between man and his Maker that he did not even establish any hierarchy in his church, and to this day every man in Islam is his own priest; the sacrifice of the Corban Bairam, the only religious solemnity known in Islam, is performed by the head of every family for himself and his children; the Imam is only the precentor in the Mosque, appointed by the civil authority to lead the public prayers of the congregation, a mere officer to preserve decorum, but with no hold over consciences, no power to decide a dogmatic question. This want of a public ritual leaves no room for an appeal to the heart or the imagination through the senses. Such simplicity is not, indeed, without its effect when one looks down, as from the desecrated galleries of St. Sophia, on a large assemblage, and beholds long lines of worshippers, standing, prostrate, or kneeling, as if moved by one will, and totally abstracted from all earthly thoughts; in certain circumstances, in a certain tone of mind, extreme simplicity of worship

is perhaps more striking than elaborate magnificence; but this is a feeling which can only strike more educated intellects, excepting under extraordinary circumstances. It does not satisfy our every day wants. Religious enthusiasm struggling under persecution, or fired with success, may raise such feelings in the least instructed; the earliest rites of the Christians in the catacombs of Rome, the assemblies of the Huguenots in the solitudes of the Cevennes, the meetings of the Covenanters in the wilds of Scotland, made, doubtless, a deeper impression upon every individual present, than can the most gorgeous functions of St. Peter's. So impressive was, doubtless, the Mohammedan ritual in the first days of the struggle against idolatry; so fired with enthusiasm rose the chant when the pilgrim caravan started for that first visit to the Ka'abah, which each felt might be the road to martyrdom, or when some victorious army consecrated by its prayer the cathedral of a newly won capital. The days when Islam was a conquering power have been long past, much longer than we generally suppose, for the Turks, the last people who maintained its reputation, were not animated by the old spirit of religion; it was rather such a destroying fury as directed the inroads of their precursors, the kindred Huns. They were, even in their best days, mentally as inferior to

the early Arabs as they were superior in rude courage to their feeble successors, whose slaves they were before they became their masters. It was barbarism, not Islamism, that conquered with them.

The Islam of the Prophet's immediate followers was noble, as all great beginnings are, but its moral decline was already visible long before its temporal authority was securely established. From the beginning it bore in its bosom the germ of death, for it was wanting in the principle which alone gives vitality to religion—Charity; Charity, the one word invented by Christianity, the word intelligible only to Christians, the virtue which the purest philosophy was unconscious of, which the unlettered Arab could not dream of. But even on Islam, Christianity has exerted its beneficent influence; here and there, in fitful starts, may be traced in the ascetical works of some of the Mussulman writers, exquisite lessons of charity, the more engaging that they are unexpected, like the faint impressions of the songs of Paradise, which the listening *jinn* may produce in imitative melody below. I should be tempted to quote the exquisite sermons of Abd-el-Kader-el-Jeilany, to prove that he at least had nearly attained the feeling of Christian charity; but as far as I know in the range of the doctors of Islam he is alone.

A fervid Mussulman, as we see him at the present

day, is very different, not in his creed only, from a fervid Christian. The fervour of the latter is a quality increasing or diminishing gradually as he advances in life; that of the former is a mental drunkenness, artificially produced, a sort of possession, a sensation which the pious occasionally indulge in, in the same way and with the same effects as the lax among them get drunk with wine. On certain occasions they thus excite themselves into a real madness, in its causes and effects, like the scenes described in the camp meetings of America, and this, almost the only kind of fervour that one meets with among Mussulmans, is, I need hardly add, entirely confined to the lowest orders. As I write this sentence, though intimately persuaded of its truth, my heart reproaches me, as if I made no account of the admirable men I have known in the middle classes of Moslem society—Turks as well as Arabs—men who are scrupulous in their observance of the law—thinking no evil, generous to their fellows, models of probity and sober living. But these men are certainly exceptions, and still more certainly devoid of all higher knowledge. Their ideas on every subject, as well as on religion, are narrow, the very sincerity of their faith is a bar to intellectual development. This immobility, which the Prophet was so anxious to make the character of his creed,

has not saved it from strange aberrations, but it condemns it to temporal decay as well as to spiritual unfruitfulness. Strong in the narrowness of his creed, the Mussulman is insensible to all attempts at proselytism; whether lax in his habits or a rigid believer, he is equally fanatical in his contempt for other religions; he may be an infidel—as there are not a few among the higher classes, especially of the Turks—his, perhaps concealed, antipathies are only the stronger. Straugely enough, the least fanatical Mussulmans are the Arabs of Arabia. It is true, that they are singularly remiss in the observance of their religious duties; but this, among other Mohammedan populations, I have found no bar to superior intolerance.

The spiritual destiny of Islam in all countries of the known world is evidently a rapid and inevitable decay. But, as in some aged tree whose trunk and branches are dead, a pale offshoot appears here and there pushing up through the hard soil, a proof that the root is not yet quite exhausted, so among the idolaters of Central Africa, Islam is making steady and peaceful conquests; every year adds to the numbers of its congregations; and one is almost tempted to believe that it is a religion peculiarly adapted to attract the rudest races of men, when one sees the Mohammedan missionaries, zealously

and without fee, propagating their faith among nations which Christianity has not been able even to approach. It may therefore still have in the order of Providence a career of utility to run before its destinies shall close, but it never can be the religion of a civilised nation. The growth of ignorance, it perishes at the approach of science, leaving a gross infidelity disfigured by a grosser immorality, like the night-blowing Cereus, which withers at the dawn, and presents at sunrise only a shapeless, fetid mass.

When it is considered that the Koran provides for all the relations of life, that in its minuteness it prescribes the machinery and details of the commercial and civil, as well as of the religious and criminal law,—that it limits the cycle of the arts,—that it contains for the devout Mussulman the only elements of all the sciences which he may lawfully cultivate; we may wonder, not at its tendency to confine the intellectual development of its followers, but much more that during a short period some of the arts and sciences should have flourished among them. The explanation of this fleeting phenomenon seems to lie in the preponderance at the court of the Caliphs of the Persian element. The Barmacides and many others of the leading men under the Abbassides were of Persian origin. Bagdad, the seat of the

empire, was on the borders of Persia and naturally affected by its vicinity. And it was from Bagdad that that intellectual movement went forth, a movement bitterly condemned by many orthodox contemporaries, which endowed the Caliphate with a scientific literature,—Greek not native in its origin, but superior to anything that contemporary learning could produce. But even during this exceptional period Islam was great in only one of the fine arts, architecture, and was reduced to seek to supply the want of sculpture and painting by calligraphy. The productions of this period were admirable, but it was of short duration, for it was contrary to the genius of Islam.

Mohammed died without having made any provision for the succession to the empire he had founded ; whether that he put off taking a step which humanity so often recoils from, or that, his faith in himself unshaken, he wished to leave the fate of his religion and dynasty to the care of Providence. It was perhaps to nominate a successor that in dying he called for pen and paper, which were withheld from him by the politic and fanatical Omar ; but we can only form conjectures on this subject, and it may well be doubted whether his affection for Fatima and Ali would, at this moment, have outweighed the political considerations which had raised Abou Behr

and Omar in his lifetime to such pre-eminent importance among the Believers, and now, in securing to them the Caliphate, in fact give stability to the rule he had founded. A singular providence, or a still more singular prudence, seems to have guided the early founders of Islam; and however we may judge the personal character of Omar, it cannot be doubted that he was the founder of the temporal empire whose faith Mohammed had fixed. Whatever may have been the Prophet's intention, Ali, though unfitted to rule both by his bloodfeuds with many of the Arab tribes and his extreme scrupulosity, never renounced his pretensions as the only legitimate Successor, and his children and the descendants of one of them, as representing the blood of the Prophet, have retained even to this day a lasting hold on the affections of the Arabs, especially in the Hedjaz.

Even under the iron rule of the Ommeyyades, Medina continued attached to their family; there they exercised an authority which the lieutenants of the Caliph of Damascus could seldom counterbalance, and formed a rallying point to which the discontented from all parts of the empire flocked. The revolution which substituted the Abbasside Caliphs for the Beni Ommeyyah was fomented by the partisans of the Alides, but none of them possessed the talent to profit by it; and the restless intrigues of their



fautors soon drew upon them the suspicion and persecution of their new sovereigns. Notwithstanding however the weakness or the vices which alone distinguished the members of the house of Ali, the veneration for their name was undiminished. In proportion as the power of the Caliphs of Bagdad decreased in Arabia, after the brilliant reign of Haroun-el-Raschid, the authority of the lineal descendants of the Prophet augmented. At one time the feeling of the justice of their claims became so general, enforced as it was by the private virtues of Ali Ridha, that the Caliph Mamun saw himself obliged to nominate him as his successor. A timely cup of poison removed him from the steps of the throne; but though the falling sceptre was thus restored to the hands of the *fainéant* Abbassides, they were obliged, in the end, to compound for the nominal sovereignty of Arabia, by issuing a diploma which conferred the principality of Mecca upon a descendant of Ali; thus giving a legal sanction to their long-established *de facto* authority. Such is the origin of the Sherifs or Emirs of Mecca. They now reigned in the Hedjaz with an authority greatly limited by the turbulent nobles of their own house, who formed a sort of patrician oligarchy, and were always inclined to regard the Prince as only *primus inter pares*. Under feeble princes the violence and

rapacity of these nobles knew no bounds but those set by their own internal feuds, which every new Emir as soon as he had secured himself in the possession of office would of course do everything to foster, leaning first to one party and then to another ; but when a man of courage and determination succeeded to the government, such as the late Sherif Ghaleb, his first care was to secure the free exercise of his power by indiscriminately crushing all factions. A more regular but despotic form of government, dependent for its duration on the person of the ruler, would then succeed to the reign of anarchy, and, during such periods, the rapid development of the commerce of the Hedjaz affords a good proof of the prosperity to which under a well-regulated and firm government it may attain.

At the time of Sultan Selim's conquest of Egypt and assumption of the Caliphate, which, as he was not a Koreish, has always been a usurpation in the eyes of the Arabs, the reigning sherif, Abu Nomai, by politicly recognizing his claims as suzerain and protector of the Holy Cities, averted the storm of Turkish conquest from his states, and obtained for his own person and his successors a confirmation of their privileges. Burckhardt has related how the Wahabites attacked and weakened the power of the Sherif Ghaleb, obliging him to lay aside his state,

and appear in public with the simplicity of primitive times, and Mohammed Ali, who was sent to his assistance, deposed him and sent him prisoner to Constantinople. So long as the Egyptian troops occupied Arabia, the sherif was a mere pensioned puppet in his hands, despicable alike in the eyes of Turks and Arabs; on their withdrawal, and the substitution of Turkish soldiers and pashas for the Egyptian authority, a struggle commenced, which ended in the deposition of the intruded sherif, Ebn A'oun, and the restoration of the family of Abu Nomai in the person of the present emir, Abd el Motaleb. The conflict of the two powers, thus so impolitically forced into contact, was not terminated by this measure; equal rights or equal pretensions cannot co-exist in one country without producing many heart-burnings between the chiefs, and an entire paralysis of the powers of government. All Arab feelings of nationality are arrayed against the Turks, and while the sherif has almost entirely withdrawn from any correspondence with the pashas of Jidda and Medina, and their authority is not even nominally recognised beyond the walls of their residence, his power, notwithstanding his personal unpopularity, is readily acknowledged by the Arabs, founded as it is on the double sanction of legitimate succession and popular opinion.

The present Sherif, Abd el Motaleb, son of Sherif Ghaleb, was only restored to his paternal heritage three years ago. He is the tenth in descent from Abu Nomai (أبو نمي), and the thirtieth from Ali and Fatimah. He had spent twenty-five years of his life as a state prisoner at Constantinople, and he has acquired in adversity enlarged views which may be useful to him as a governor, though he has also perhaps adopted manners and ideas which are distasteful to the Arabs, who hate everything Turkish. He has four sons; of the eldest the Arabs speak with the greatest contempt as a mere Stambouli, but the second, a fine looking eagle-eyed boy of thirteen years, is said to possess great talents, and to show great alacrity in adopting all Arab habits. The Sherif keeps up little state, the only emblem of his dignity being the parasol which is borne over his head when he goes abroad. On ordinary occasions it is of crimson silk with a gold fringe, but during the Haj this is exchanged for one of cloth of silver and gold. His style is "His Highness our Lord the Sherif Abd el Motaleb, Lord of the Community (of Islam), Prince of Mecca." He has in his pay a body of three hundred Arabs, and a body guard of a hundred negroes armed with the jambiah and lance, fine, strapping, insolent-looking fellows, whose functions somewhat resemble those of the *cavasses*

in Egypt, and they exercise them with a rough and ready freedom which astonished me in a country where the Turks are fain to move along with the most modest caution. Some fifty or sixty household slaves complete the Sherif's establishment; but he has a court containing a seal-bearer, sword-bearer, and all the other officers of Oriental sovereignty. He is about to give proof of his willingness to abandon antiquated customs, in the marriage of his daughter, which is to take place in a month; thus abolishing the old family law of the Sherifs, which condemned their daughters to pine in single unblessedness.

The Sherif of Mecca is very erroneously regarded by some persons in Europe as a sort of Mussulman pope, a comparison which is utterly destitute of foundation. He combines no spiritual with his temporal power; the *cadi* and the *mufti* give decisions in law and religion with which he cannot interfere; he bears the sword, not the *crozier*; in the house of God he has no distinguishing place, and if he prays in the first row of the believers after the Imam, it is only as first of the people, not as separated from them. Among the descendants of the Prophet there have been many reputed saints, but I could not learn that the slightest idea of personal sanctity is attached either to the Sherif or his office.

The result of my own observations on the state of the country, combined with the opinion of many Turks who know it well, is that no regular government is possible but that of the Sherif. When occupying the country with an overpowering force, under the command of stern and able generals, such as was Ibrahim Pasha, the Turks may extort a precarious obedience; but the untamed nature of the Arab will only submit impatiently to the hated yoke, ever ready to seize the first opportunity of throwing it off. The popular contempt for the Turk is only equalled by the hatred in which he is held. It is not fear but disunion, which he well knows how to foster, that maintains his authority. The Sherif on the other hand, with half the present force, and aided by the weight of his name, could preserve the peace of the country more effectually than a dozen Turkish pashas, with their undisciplined arnaouts and feeble regulars. He has an administration ready formed to his hands, and there is little fear that at the present day the excesses committed in former times by the Sherifs—that is, the families claiming a descent from Sittah Fatmah—could be renewed. His father spent his long reign in curbing their influence, to the increase of public security and of his own power and resources. He himself is certainly no fool, and whatever complaints may be made of the

position of our Indians in the Hedjaz, he cannot be fairly accused of the short-comings of a government in which he has a very small share, or the exactions of legal officers, who are sent from Constantinople, and are entirely independent of him. To restore the sherif families to their old power, to encourage the pretensions which his father combatted, would doubly compromise his position, in the well-grounded right it would give to Constantinople, backed by the European powers, to depose him; and, even if this did not occur at once, in the impotency to which it would reduce himself. Were he secured in the enjoyment of a moderate power, limited by the provisions of the Tanzimat, which has not yet been even heard of in Arabia, there is great hope that the immense resources of the country would be rapidly developed, while the presence of English and French consuls in Jidda would prove a wholesome check to any despotic tendencies he might exhibit.



## CHAPTER VI.

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An Arab Gentleman—Court Equipages—Roadside Cafés—A Foot-Bath—Arab Shepherds—Mount Arafat—Arab Travelling—The Hills of Karah—Their Flora—Approach Tayf.

*February 23rd.*—ON our arrival at Jidda, Mr. Cole had been kind enough to write to the Sherif of Mecca at Tayf, to obtain leave for us to go there ; we being unwilling to leave Arabia without making a short excursion into the interior. After an interval of five days an answer was received, not simply granting the permission we had asked for, but expressing the pleasure it would give His Highness to receive our visit ; he desired that we should come as his guests, and promised to send a Sherif to accompany us with the number of camels we might require for the journey. This excess of attention could be attributed only to his personal consideration for Mr. Cole, whom he had known before his appointment to Jidda, and who has neglected neither this nor any other means of strengthening his influence with the authorities. On the day fixed by the



Sherif in his letter the dromedaries arrived, and we received a message announcing the visit of his wakil in Jidda with the Sherif Hamed, one of the two Kaimakans of Mecca, who was to act as what the Persians call our memindar. He arrived at the time we had named, one of the finest specimens of humanity that imagination can conceive.

A very dark complexion, as far removed from the negro swarthiness as from the bright Caucasian hue, to which the red blood coursing under the thin transparent skin gave a wonderful vivacity, finely chiselled features, regular teeth of dazzling whiteness, jet-black pointed beard and moustaches, large lustrous swimming eyes, in which many a fair lady would love to see her image reflected—all gave to his head a rare distinction. His fresh youthful voice, slim form, the delicacy of his hands and feet, his quiet elastic step, like that of a racer, all bore witness to the purity of his descent. I never felt less ashamed of acknowledging my belief in the real value of blood, than when in presence of this gentleman of seventy descents, before whose nobility the sovereigns and gentry of Europe must hide their insignificant anti-quity. The picturesqueness of his costume matched the beauty of his person. Over a white caftan he wore a loose cherry-coloured jubba; round his waist a cashmere shawl, in which was stuck, cross-ways, a

large, silver-sheathed, curved poniard, called the *jam-biah*; over his shoulder a sabre was slung by silken cords. His head was covered by the yellow and red *kufiah*, which hung down behind, and was fastened to his head by a wide white muslin turban, over the sides of which the ends of the *kufiah* were thrown up. His feet were bare; his sandals, like those of a Roman statue, being left at the edge of the carpet. With all this, his manners were so coldly quiet that the stiffest drawing-room in England could have found nothing in them to blame, and I confess that when he left my room after the first meeting, I was inclined to wish that His Highness had sent us some less high-born or less unbending guide.

The next day, at the Asser (3, P.M.), was fixed for our departure. We then returned the visit of Sherif Hamed, and from his amiable reception formed as favourable an opinion of his good qualities as on his first appearance we had been pleased with his person. The Sherifs are treated with great respect by the people. Whilst we were with him several visitors came in, and all immediately went up to him and kissed his hand.

At four o'clock punctually, the court carriages,—that is, the dromedaries,—were at our door; but our servants were not ready to start till half-past five. Dromedaries, we found, can only carry such

baggage as can be packed in sacks or saddle-bags; everything, therefore, had to be re-packed, beds to be left behind; various bottles of the forbidden liquor, which we had received a hint we had better take with us, had to be stowed, at no small risk of breakage, in the saddle-bags; the *batterie de cuisine* was mercilessly discarded, to the despair and astonishment of the cook; and what I regretted more than all, the camera obscura was also declared too lumbering a companion for such a trip. It was nearly six when we rode out of the Mecca gate, a train of thirteen dromedaries, all mounted, some carrying double, accompanied by the wakil of the sherif and Mr. Cole, with a numerous cavalcade of his "subjects." The party consisted of M. D. and the dragoman of the French consulate, whose services he had borrowed from his consul, two European servants and three natives, Sherif Hamed with an attendant, the head dromedary groom of His Highness, and four or five of the slaves who form his body-guard. But I must not allow the evening to close in without describing the gay housings of our dromedaries, which were decked as when they carry the Sherif himself. They were magnificent animals, of the famed breed of Oman, nearly eight feet high to the hump, but differing in appearance from the ordinary camel only in the

fineness of the limbs and the smallness of the head, as a hunter differs from a dray-horse. The mass of silk, and gold, and feathers, with which they were covered, was in detail as beautiful as the general effect was gaudy ; it exhibited combinations of bright colours, such as no one would venture upon in sober Europe, even for the furniture of a boudoir, but which one sees in these sunny climates at every turn, both on man and beast, without either shocking or fatiguing the eye. The saddle was the ordinary saddle of the Hedjaz, differing little from the pack-saddle, excepting in the tall upright pummels of embossed silver, worked at Mecca. Over this were laid saddle-bags of goat's hair in various colours, embroidered with gold, from which hung long strings of tassels of silk and worsted. In front, covering the usual cushions for the legs, was placed the meiraka (ميركة), a close network of leather, which hung on each side of the neck over the shoulder, ending in long chequered ribbons of silk. The whole of the leather is concealed by rows of oblong pieces of cloth, about four inches by two, which serve as groundwork for an embroidery of gold and silver thread, sewed down with different coloured silks, in a vast variety of geometrical patterns, each being fringed with a row of black ostrich feathers. Over the back pommel of the saddle was hung the saffah (سافيه),

a long stripe of chequered silk, terminating in three tassels on each side, which almost touch the ground. Over all was thrown the saddle-cloth, a patchwork of red, green, and yellow silk, with various-coloured fringes; above it a crimson-dyed sheepskin; and from one side, suspended from the pommels, hung the sabre-case, *jafir* (جفير), much like the *meiraka*, of leather netting, and like it covered with rows of embroidered and feathered ornaments. The head-piece, *rassan* (رسان), with its row of tassels, and the bridle-rope, were of crimson silk. I know not whether this description conveys any distinct idea to the reader, but it is no easy task for one who is not deeply initiated in the mysteries of needle-work to make the handiwork of the Meccan dames intelligible to European *Tabithas*. The effect was both gay and rich, and as we stalked slowly through the market and out of the Mecca gate, we were not perhaps insensible to those feelings of satisfied vanity with which a schoolboy in his Easter suit struts about, the conscious cynosure of all eyes.

In twenty minutes, as the sun was setting, we dismounted at a coffee house, called "the Sebil," from the neighbouring fountain. Our Mussulman guides here said their evening prayers; and after drinking a cup of coffee and smoking our *nargilehs* we shook our kind friends by the hand, they turning

their horses' heads to regain the town before the gates should close, and we proceeding on our way, and in our inexperience of dromedary riding, hustling each other at every step. In the dark it was impossible to distinguish the features of the country we were passing through, though the star-light was sufficiently bright to enable us to trace the line of the wide, well-worn road we were following. Before we had passed the second of the eleven coffee houses which mark the road to Mecca, we had outstripped, on our fleet dromedaries, the many long lines of laden camels which were slowly wending towards the Holy City. The caravans always travel at night, probably on account of the intense heat which ever reigns in the plain from Wady Fatmah to Jidda, and which even the camels support with difficulty. It was eleven o'clock when an evil genius, in the shape of thirst, or the fatigue produced by the unaccustomed movement, tempted us to stop at the third of these coffee shops, called "Bejadiah." Here we immediately applied ourselves to a water-melon, while coffee was being prepared; and we had hardly swallowed our cup of the grateful liquid, and were preparing to re-mount, when one of our party was seized with a violent fit of shivering and sickness, — a colic in fact, which he fancied was the beginning of an attack of fever; we were consequently forced

to spread our carpets, and pass the night here. These coffee houses are sheds of palm mats supported on poles, generally open to the road, and closed on their sides by dry branches. In front of each is a hearth of masonry on which the coffee is prepared ; the flickering flame is kept burning all night, this being the time when travellers pass ; and recalls the hospitable times of old Arabia, when a fire was always kept burning near the tent to direct the traveller in the darkness to a place of refreshment and repose. The next morning, soon after sunrise, we were in saddle, and following a course nearly due east, we reached Haddah in two hours, across a flat, grassy plain, hemmed in on either side by low hills of secondary sandstone and talc. Haddah, the half-way to Mecca, is a considerable village, containing a mosque and several coffee houses, such as that I have described ; it was now animated by the presence of a large body of irregular cavalry, who were encamped here in order to take advantage of the spring herbage. We had here plenty of time to complete the scanty toilette which our early departure had curtailed ; and a sheep was sacrificed to the appetites of our escort, which proceeding, with the accustomed sluggishness of Arab movements, consumed five hours. Mats were spread by the host on the mud floor, on which our carpets were spread ; and there lying, I amused

myself with watching the frequenters of the *café*,—men, women, sheep, cats, and poultry ; or found a more serious occupation in parrying the attacks of the ants, with which the place swarmed, and of the musquitoes, which enlivened the air with their shrill buzzing. As we were starting, after bestowing the becoming backshish on the proprietor, we were stopped with a petition to give a bottle, or at least a glass of brandy for a lying-in woman, who, from a neighbouring shed, had smelt the perfume of the forbidden liquor, and wanted some to bathe her *feet*, in order to counteract the noxious effect the smell would otherwise produce. Although the device was ingenious we refused to be its dupes ; and after explaining, with the gravity of a Galen, that as the lady had already given birth to her little one, the brandy could no longer be of any use to her, indeed, quite the reverse, we continued our journey.

The Wady Fatmah opens to the left in quitting Haddah, green with its clumps of palm trees, and the bright vegetation nourished by its numerous springs. Continuing along a wide valley, we came abreast of the hill called Doma el Achmar in rather less than three hours ; and at this point we were half-way between Mecca, which lies to the left, and Haddah. Passing between Doma el Achmar and Doma el Aswad, we entered the narrow Wady Aca-



shiah, from which several lateral valleys branch. Evening had closed in, and after proceeding for half-an-hour further our guides stopped us, having missed the right turn in the darkness, whilst one of them rode on to inquire at some cottages whose fires we saw in the distance, the road we were to follow. We had indeed missed the cross-road we should have taken, and had thus approached considerably towards Mecca; and I almost think, from the whispered anxiety of our conductors, that we had already passed the boundaries of the consecrated ground. At all events we were here halted for twenty minutes, and then returning down the valley and entering what seemed in the dark a narrow rocky ravine, we reached, after a good deal of scrambling, our night-quarters at Hassaniah. This is a garden, or as we should call it in England, a farm, belonging to the Sherif. Here we were welcomed by one of his under-secretaries, a spare little Turk of Stamboul, who had come from Mecca to meet us, and had brought with him a ready-dressed dinner. We passed the night in the open air, in an enclosure formed of palm branches, in the centre of which was a blazing fire. Dinner was quickly served on a tray placed on one of the many drums which lay about the place, the instruments of recreation of the negroes employed on the farm. We soon turned

over on our carpets, glad to repose ourselves from the shaking of the dromedaries, which was beginning to tell severely on some of the party.

In the morning we found that we were encamped in a defile, from which a cultivated plain, covered with fruit trees and growing crops, opened to the right. The plain is fertilised by the water of a spring brought to it from a distance by a conduit of masonry, opened in some places for the convenience of the herds. We followed its course for some time over extensive plains, bounded on the east by the lofty range of Gebel Karah, which, by some Arab authors, is considered the boundary of the Hedjaz in this direction. Here we came upon large flocks of sheep, and herds of a small and well-made kine, distinguished by a high flexible hump on the neck. They were tended by young men, models for the painter of Scripture pastoral scenes, who wore a short cloth, fastened round the waist by a long leather cord ; a belt over the shoulder adorned with little plates of brass, to which were suspended the powder flask and several small pouches. Thin long raven locks hung in curly plaits over their shoulders and neck ; a few wore a dark cloth thrown over the head, and all had sandals. Their general complexion, the result of constant exposure to the sun, is a dark brown ; their eyes are piercingly bright

but not large. Their regular but rather angular features, their slim limbs, all formed for action, joined to their independent bearing, correspond with all that one has read or dreamed of the free sons of the Desert. Each carried in his hand a small lance, having a stem about three feet long, terminating in a spike at one end, at the other in a blade, wrought, like the spike in iron, and covered with a variety of patterns inlaid in brass. In addition to this, many bore a matchlock; and most of them had the silver-sheathed poniard stuck across the waist. There were a few women also at the water-course, but their repulsively dark, dirty-looking dress did not invite attention to their careworn features. What above all delighted me was, meeting several troops entirely composed of young lambs, driven by little naked urchins of four or five years—studies for an Albano. These Arabs belonged to the Oteybah; their usual residence is several days' journey to the east, but they were now in this country for the sake of the spring grass. In an hour and a half we had left this biblical scene behind us, and were in sight of the Wâdy Muna, having Gebel Semar on the right. After another hour of slow travelling we reached a stone-built coffee house, at which we dismounted, not many hundred yards from the place of pilgrimage, Mount Arafat, which rises immediately in front

of where we sat. Mount 'Arafat is a low pointed hillock, near the summit of which is a white-washed mosque, with a minaret, looking like a small obelisk; below it is the whitened platform, from which the preacher, mounted on a dromedary, delivers the sermon, to be present at which is the essential duty of the pilgrimage.\* Curiously enough, this is not one of the places forbidden to be trodden by unbelievers; but being unwilling to shock unnecessarily the prejudices of our guides, whom we had had some difficulty in inducing to take this road, which is rather to the left (north) of the direct one, we contented ourselves with the view from the *café*. Between it and the hill runs the water-course, built to convey potable water to Mecca by order of the wife of Haroun Er-rashid, the Lady Zobeydah, so well known to readers of the Arabian Nights.

I seated myself with the Sherif and the effendi, who had accompanied us from Hassaniah, in the narrow shade afforded by the wall of the *café*, and applying ourselves to luncheon, we offered some of

\* On the day of pilgrimage the preacher sits on a camel, because the Prophet, during his last pilgrimage, being sick, made the tour of the Ca'aba on his camel, and remained on it while he preached. 'Arafat (recognition), is so called, because Ibrahim, the Patriarch, after the vision in which he was commanded to sacrifice his son Ishmael, wandered about for a day in perplexity, as to whether the order came from God. On the second day, being at 'Arafat, he had a second vision, and he then recognised (عرف) (*'arafa*) its truth.

our bread and cheese to two Arabs whom we found established there before us. They refused what was sent to them, returning it to the Sherif with the message, they had already eaten that day. This astonished me, who have a high opinion of the digestive powers of the Arabs, and I received a curious explanation of the phenomenon. It seems that it is contrary to etiquette for Arab travellers to eat at the expense of more than one person in the day; if, therefore, they receive a bowl of milk or a crust of bread they can accept no further hospitality till after sunset, excepting from the same person who has already entertained them. The Sherif added, that to take anything before sunset from a second host would be a disgrace for an Arab, which he could only expiate by striking his head with his own poniard till the blood flows. Such a rule is not unintelligible in a country where the duties of hospitality are still so strictly observed. It must be necessary to put some check on a liberality which might become ruinously onerous.

From 'Arafat we rode on two hours and a half further to Shedadeh, the place at which the mules ordered by his Highness awaited us; and here we lingered more than two hours, partly occupied by our people in loading the mules, but chiefly sacrificed to that listless indolence which is the characteristic

of all Eastern countries. In ordinary life the activity as well as the frugality of the Arab are wonderfully overrated; no one sleeps so much, eats so much, or drinks so much (water and milk) as the Arab, whenever all these good things are at his command; although he must be capable, if travellers' tales be true,—I have myself never witnessed anything of the kind,—of enduring privations we could not or would not expose ourselves to. A Sherif I met in leaving Tayf, a well-informed man, who has been a great traveller, described to me a journey he made across the desert to Bagdad in thirty-six days. He seemed never to have made more than eight or nine hours a day, starting about sunrise, resting for an hour towards midday, and stopping at the assar. This was a journey through an almost uninhabited desert, where there could be no temptation to linger on the road. It is the Arab way of travelling; the idea of making twelve or fourteen hours a day never occurs to them, unless pressed by some most important business. It is a mistake to suppose that any uncivilised race of men is as uniformly active as the most listless Europeans: time has no value for them, and they look upon what they consider our restlessness as a sort of madness.

There were several Hodeylah Arabs loitering about the café when we halted, and we amused our-

selves in examining their trappings. A loose shirt buttoned at the throat, the sleeves narrowed towards the wrist, was their only garment. This was fastened round the waist with a plaited cord of leather about twelve feet long, the nesa'a (نَسَاة), ornamented with beads of tin, and wound round so as to form a broad girdle. Over this is buckled an embroidered belt to which the sheath of the curved poniard, the handle turned towards the left, is made fast. A baldrick of leather with plated brass scales is slung over the left shoulder, and to it are hung pouches containing a flint and steel, a roll of gun-match, needles, thread, an awl, and other useful instruments. A square cloth of a dark colour doubled crossways covers the head, and it is kept in its place by the 'akās (عَقَاس), a hoop of a black composition, the outer rim of which is inlaid with pieces of delicately engraved mother-o'pearl, rather larger than a shilling. This circlet worn rather to one side gives a jaunty air to the whole costume, which is increased by the long braids of black hair hanging down on either side of the face. The lance, their constant companion, must not be forgotten; and I learned that every tribe has an invariable and distinctive pattern for the ornaments with which the steel head is inlaid. In addition to the useful part of the costume, many wore a variety of strings and

chains which might pass for love tokens ; they had, however, no object but adornment, *fantasia*, as they say. Those who possessed matchlocks bore them in black leather cases, both ends of which were ornamented with long fringes of the same material. In turn I was the object of curiosity, and a Colt's revolver above all completed the admiration and astonishment, which the long range of my rifles had excited. Among the crowd which had gathered round were many children of both sexes, and I learned a dodge from them which I am sure my young friends at home will appreciate. They wore, as ornaments, necklaces made of the yellow date, Kelayd esh-sham, strung upon a piece of twine. They were probably intended as amulets ; but the wearers often apply them to a more practical purpose.

We had exchanged the gay saddles of our dromedaries for the very primitive pack-saddles of the mules, which, to the great annoyance of some of the party, were not even provided with stirrups, and in less magnificent style we now continued our journey over the low hills which in succession form the approach to the range of Karah. Basins of verdure are formed between their ridges, and turning round to look at the country we had left behind, when already at a considerable elevation, I enjoyed the



beautiful view presented by the setting sun, as it shone on the bright patches of verdure, or gilded the bare sides of the hills, which from the winding of the path seemed to have closed in behind us. The difference of temperature at Kor, a village of stone-built cottages, which we reached in two hours, was evidence of the ascent we had made; we slept here in an open court, and were not sorry to have coverlets and cloaks to ward off the coolness of the night air.

The next day's journey tried our mules' mettle, in an ascent of three hours up the short steep zigzags of Gebel Karah. The road was made or improved by Ibrahim Pasha during the Egyptian occupation; and, impossible as it seems, he is said to have dragged artillery up its precipitous windings. In some places it is still in tolerable repair, but in others the masses of granite with which it was paved have been displaced by the torrents, and now block up the road, rendering it sometimes almost impassable. Here and there a turn has been widened, so as to form a resting-place at which the panting cattle may draw breath, a provision absolutely necessary to prevent their falling exhausted, even when as lightly loaded as were our mules. The number of trees and plants which cover the side of the mountain render the ascent, notwithstanding its difficulty, both agree-

able and interesting; and the view looking back over the hills of débris and Gebel Otēga to the sea is truly magnificent. The steepness of the face of the rock up which the road is carried, may be best indicated by stating that though it was ten o'clock before we reached the summit, the whole road was still in the shade. Many of the vegetable productions were new to me, and probably a botanist could in a few days collect the materials for a large and varied flora. Acacias, wild olives and figs overgrown with white clematis, were the familiar trees; of herbs, the shich (شبح), a kind of absinth with blue flowers, and a thick-leaved mint, the shedad, were the only old acquaintance I recognised. Besides these were the athab (اثاب), the tree which furnishes the matches for the Arab guns; the arak, whose branches form the tooth-brushes, with which every Arab's pouch is provided; the tobeg, with yellow flowers, a worthless plant as my Arab friends told me; the hamēda, whose leaves have a pleasant acid taste like the sorrel, with pale, pendulous, red-veined flowers; the thick-leaved dehen (دهن), whose milky juice is said to afford a poison fatal to wolves and panthers; and the hharfy (خرفي), whose root pounded with milk is sovereign against certain cutaneous disorders not uncommon in this country. Half-way up is a

beautiful stream, 'Ain mersel, whose course is over rocks, among which it forms small clear pools, on whose brinks grow many sweet-smelling herbs. Its water is celebrated for its lightness and salubrity, but though I drank of it as in duty bound, I could perceive no peculiar excellence of flavour, probably from having no great taste for the beverage.

As we approached the summit of the mountain we saw the brow covered with a number of armed men, the inhabitants of the neighbouring village, who, headed by two Sherifs, had come out to welcome us,—a wild-looking body of at least a hundred men. After greeting the Sherifs, one of whom was the lord of the village, the other having been sent to meet us from Tayf, we rode across a broad table-land which crowns the summit, abounding in good water and excellent soil. Its fields bordered with apricot and pear-trees bore evidence of careful culture, and are said to yield abundant harvests of wheat. Having reached the village, Heddah, we were conducted to a very good house, built by a Russian renegade who died here; this had been prepared for our reception by the prince's orders, and immediately on our entering it, two sheep were slaughtered, the perfection of Arab courtesy. With rare consideration, rooms for repose had been assigned to us upstairs, while in a saloon opening on the court

a divan was arranged to receive the visits of the natives. The thermometer, which during the last days of our stay at Jidda, had ranged from 84° to 86° Fahr., was at mid-day in the court of the house 64°, and it is said that a delicious freshness always reigns here even in the greatest heats of summer. We remained here five hours, while the dinner, consisting of the mutton of our victims, and mountains of rice, with fresh and sour milk, was got ready. After full honour had been done to it, we again set out, our train now increased by the addition of the two Sherifs who had met us at the top of the ascent.

This side of Karah has a very different character to that which we ascended this morning ; the eastern descent is exceedingly gradual, reaching the plain of Tayf over a succession of alternating hills and valleys. The view of the hills, granite and schist, whose lower parts are covered with vegetation, in which the wild lavender, rosemary and salvia predominate, presented great variety as we wound among them ; we passed two ruined fortalices, and crossed the Wâdy Mohram, the dried bed of a torrent, so-called because here the pilgrims from Yemen, put on the *Ihram*. Surmounting another ridge, we then rode through Wady Karn, "the horn," so-called from the curved direction which it follows ; in its entire length this valley is

dotted with villages. The next ascent brought us in sight of Tayf, of which we had obtained a distant view from Heddah, situated in a sandy plain, surrounded by low hills, the valleys between which were filled with verdure.



## CHAPTER VII.

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Arrival at Tayf—Court of the Sherif—Audience—Visitors—  
Ancient Idols—Whence Tayf came—Audience of Leave—A  
Model Arab Prince—He knows European Politics—Parting  
Gifts.

*February 26th.*—It was an hour past sunset when we entered the plain of Tayf; and before long we were under the walls of the town, one of the gates, Bab er-ria, being opened to admit us. We were conducted to the best house in the place, belonging to Abdallah Shems, a rich Meccan merchant of Indian origin; this house his Highness placed at our disposal, and had furnished from his palace in Mecca. Masha'als (fire-pots) were burning at the door, and as we dismounted, Ibrahim Aga, the Sherif's treasurer, with the master of the house and his son, came to welcome us. We were ushered through a long ante-chamber, filled with servants, into a court, one half of which was opened to the sky, and had a large cistern overshadowed by a vine in the centre; the other half, raised by several steps and roofed

over, forming the Liwan, was furnished as a reception room.\* Two large silver candlesticks, beautifully chased, with tall yellow wax tapers, together about 7 feet high, were placed in the middle of the estrade, a gilt arm-chair occupied each corner, thus only leaving room for the service in the space unoccupied by the embroidered silk divan. After all the minute enquiries after our health, usual on such occasions, especially my companion's, whose grisly beard obtained for him innumerable marks of tender solicitude, and after smoking the pipe of welcome and drinking the coffee of hospitality, we were invited to partake of more substantial refreshments; these consisted of a splendid dinner served in the Constantinople fashion in a room behind the Liwan. The first dish was the entire lamb stuffed with raisins and pistachios (the invariable commencement of a feast), served in an immense charger of silver. Soup, sweet cream, sour milk, and little plates of salad and olives were ranged all round as *hors d'œuvres*. After we had done ample justice to the pressing invitations of our entertainer the treasurer, who put

\* Round the wall of the Liwan were inscribed nine couplets from the celebrated poem in praise of the Prophet, called the Bordah (the mantle); and our host explained to me that they act as an insurance against danger of fire and robbers. I would give the verses, of which I have a copy here, but that I fear I might run a risk of prosecution from the insurance offices, if I thus interfered with their profits.

great lumps of the tender well-done meat into our hands, he himself not partaking of the good things, the lamb was replaced by an immense succession of dishes, served without any order appreciable to a European palate. Turkish dinners have been so often described that a list of the dishes, half of which we did not even see, would be nothing new to the reader, and would merely make him suspect me of having borrowed the bill-of-fare from the cook, or having taken a master's degree at a restaurant. We soon cried out Hold, enough! when the rice, the grace-meat of all oriental dinners, was served.

Sherifs Hamed and Selim, with the effendi, had left before dinner to render an account of our safe arrival to the prince, to whom daily couriers had been despatched all along the road with information of the progress of his valued if not valuable guests. The Haznadar, after coffee had been served, followed them, to assure him I suppose that we had not lost our appetite; and in another hour we were taken upstairs to our bedroom, which had been arranged in dormitory fashion with three very European beds, and no small wealth of curtains. With difficulty I had persuaded the master of the house that it was unnecessary to carry the huge candlesticks upstairs, when they would have given our dormitory the appearance of a *chapelle ardente*, and that the tapers



which were placed in our hands were all we should require to undress by.

The next morning we received an intimation that the Sherif would receive us at ten o'clock, at which hour gaily caparisoned horses of the purest Nejd were at our door, together with several of the black body guard to act as escort. The Sherif Salem, who had joined us at Korra, and who had some office, governor I think, at Tayf, and our little effendi also accompanied us. After passing through the bazaar we left the town, the guard of Turkish regulars turning out at the gate to honour the guests of the prince, and a ride of twenty minutes through an open country, in some parts cultivated as vegetable gardens, brought us to the palace—a newly finished edifice of considerable extent, built in the Constantinople style, on one side open to the road, on the other enclosed by a garden. In a square space before the palace was drawn up a body of negroes dressed in blue cotton shirts with a pattern of white spots down the sides and on the shoulder; they were armed with guns, lances and poniards, stalwart fellows, with the bold, somewhat impudent bearing which marks the slave in authority. At the door we were received on alighting by the treasurer, chief secretary, and Sherif Hamed, and were ushered through a large

carpeted hall which forms the entrance, into the saloon of reception. This was a common Turkish salamlık with white-washed walls; at the end, a divan of Lyons silk was placed along the continuous row of windows; down each side were laid thick Persian felts, on which stood gilt arm-chairs of Calcutta make, which I recognised as belonging to the same set as those in our house. There was no other furniture, excepting two semicircular tables of common wood, placed against the wall, on which were placed porcelain vases of no value, the only ornament being a splendid sabre hung against the wall. The windows looked directly on the small square where the guard was drawn up; behind them some two or three hundred curious persons pressed forward to see the novelty, of which they enjoyed a full view, as the open unglazed windows were almost on a level with the ground.

We had not time to remark these details, for the Sherif entered almost at the same time as ourselves by another door; no doubt to avoid the rudeness of receiving us sitting, as he rises for no one. He bowed with cold dignity as he passed us, and taking his place in an arm-chair desired us to be seated in similar chairs on the other side. He is a man of about fifty-six years, tall and spare, of a light olive complexion, with aquiline nose, and eyes, which

though small, sparkle with intelligence. He has the three slashes on each side of the face called mashāly (مشالي), which though now falling into disuse, were till lately the mark of all persons born within the sacred territory. His dress was a caftan of Indian silk, over which was thrown a pale blue merino jubbah, with green silk lining. His head-dress the ordinary kufiek, bound with a striped Cashmere turban. In his hand he carried the mesh'ab, the camel stick of almond wood, which is undoubtedly the original of the jackal-headed wand with which some of the Egyptian deities are represented, and which is here almost regarded as the symbol of royal power.\* In the Cashmere waist-band was stuck a gold-handled and jewelled poniard.

Sherbets, sweetmeats, pipes and coffee were handed in succession, while the prince made the usual enquiries after our health, and the impression which his country had made upon us. He then asked the news from Constantinople and Europe, showing considerable acquaintance with names and events in the different countries he spoke of. My

\* The mesh'ab is of immemorial use in Arabia, and is historically interesting. Such a stick must have been Aaron's rod, which "brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds." A mesha'ab is mentioned as forming part of the scanty succession of Mohammed.

companion being a French subject, the Sherif took this opportunity of enlightening himself on the emperor's real position, making minute enquiries regarding the *coup d'état*, the means which were employed to effect it, and the proclamation of the empire, which, as he evidently knows what a republic is, seemed to puzzle him especially. Whether he perceived, in the vagueness of the phrases which were interpreted to him in praise of the *coup d'état* and the unanimous choice of the French nation, that the subject was an embarrassing one I know not; but he continued for some time, and I fancied, with a little malice, to push his enquiries. The conversation, naturally, fell chiefly into the hands of my companion on account of his having an interpreter, who found it no easy task to translate many of the ambiguous phrases which were dictated to him; but when by a dextrous turn given to the conversation, the present alliance between France and England was brought upon the tapis, his flowing eloquence had ample scope to dictate upon its advantages, and the salvation of the Ottoman Empire, which must result from it. We were kept for an hour and a half, and during this time the Sherif made many remarks, which were not only distinguished by finesse, but showed an amount of knowledge not common, even among

the educated classes of Europe; his acquaintance, indeed, with the history of the principal persons who have figured in public life during the last twenty years would not have disgraced a statesman. Prince Metternich, even Lord Palmerston or M. Guizot of whom he spoke, would, perhaps, be puzzled if asked only his name, and, probably, know less of his country with all the means of obtaining information at their command, than the Arabian prince does of theirs. He broke off the interview, after coffee had been handed a second time, and after he had ordered the horses we had ridden to be placed at our disposal during our stay, he made a movement, as if going to rise from his seat, which, however, he did not quit, and we, making our bow, departed with the crowd of officers who had filled the lower part of the room.

This public reception by the descendant of the Prophet of the passing travellers of another faith was, it may be supposed, calculated, with an eye to the report we should perhaps make of him in Europe. We were, moreover, the first Franks who had ever been as such in Tayf, and the prince might wish to show us that Arabia is less barbarous than we imagined; or, a more probable reason is, that he wished by his reception of us to testify his regard for Mr. Cole, by whom we had been recommended

to him. To whatever due, the consideration shown us, I may say the fatiguing attentions with which we were overloaded, made no small impression on the people of the country, who now, for the first time, saw infidels treated like the most distinguished of true believers, a result more valuable than any gratification afforded to personal or national vanity.

Thus honoured by the quasi-sovereign everybody was anxious to show us attention, and our divan was always filled with visitors. They seemed ready to afford every information in their power. But on many subjects, for instance the geographical divisions of the country, the discrepancies of their statements were such, that it was impossible to place any reliance on the answers they gave. This I ascribe entirely to the looseness of their ideas, and in no degree to mistrust or a desire to deceive. Mecca, with which they are familiar, they described most minutely and correctly, and I had Burckhardt to compare with their statements; but when I asked what are the limits of the Hedjaz, I could obtain no definite answer. One man told me that "Tayf is in the Hedjaz if you choose to count it so, or in the Nejd if you please;" and this was not the servile "which you please, my pretty dear, which you please," of flattery, but only a proof of the vagueness of their expressions. All agree in saying that Mecca

and Medina are both in the Hedjaz, but nothing beyond this is positive. In fact, no distinct limits can be assigned to the divisions of a country constituted as Arabia is, with few towns; where cultivation only exists in scattered districts, and where the summer and winter resorts of its nomad inhabitants are sometimes removed from each other many days' journey. The soil it is true, is not equally free to every one, it is not the first comer who takes possession, each tribe and each subdivision of a tribe has its fixed habitation, which is as absolutely private property as the best inclosed manor in England.

In the afternoon we went to see the town, which contains few curiosities and no buildings worthy of remark, excepting the mosque, which is venerated as the tomb of Abdallah Ebn Abbas, the cousin of the Prophet and ancestor of the Abbasside caliphs. It is a large building, surmounted by a curiously constructed cupola, rising in tiers of points, not unlike a jelly-mould; the whole of recent construction, for when Burckhardt was here, it was in ruins. It is built in the wall of the town, one of the gates Bab el Yemen being at one end of it. At a short distance outside to the west, a five-sided block of granite rising in a slant from the ground is pointed out as the idol Lat. In its greatest length it measures about twelve feet, and four feet and a half to

its highest edge.\* Another of the idols of the old Arabs, El-'Izzah, is within the town; like the other it is an unhewn stone, with a depression or hollow on the north side, resembling a water-worn boulder. Whether any well authenticated tradition, or merely popular love for assigning sites to well known names, be the origin of these appellations, I could not learn. They are mentioned in the chapter of the Koran called the Star, liii. 19, 23. "What think you of El Lat and 'Izzah, and Marrat, the third? They are but names you and your fathers have given them." El Lat was adored at Tayf, but there is not only, I believe, no ancient authority for placing the worship of El-'Izzah here, but it does not even seem to have been a stone, but rather the trunk of a tree or a wooden image which was burned by the Prophet's order. The dimensions of the stone pointed out as El Lat corresponds to the description given by Herodotus and his commentator of the idol Alilat (Ἀλιλάτ, or Ἀλιδάτ), whom he compares to Urania.

\* Lat may not improbably have been such a stone as that pointed out to me. That it was this identical one, I cannot help doubting, notwithstanding the tradition of the place. When the Thakifites made their submission, and asked for a month's delay before destroying Lat, to reconcile the ladies of the town to its loss, Mohammed granted them only one indulgence. Instead of requiring them to destroy it with their own hands, he charged Abu Safian and Maghirah with the commission. They were likely to carry out their orders literally.



The word Ellat (اللات) is derived from lawa (لوى) "to bend or incline," and its recumbent position gives perhaps as good an explanation of the origin of the name, as a derivation from the attitude assumed by the worshippers. Herodotus mentions another deity Urotalt (Ουροτάλτ), whom he identifies with the Great Bacchus, but this can hardly be other than a slight corruption of the title of the Supreme God (Allah ta'alah), the *r* and *l* being easily convertible sounds.\*

The town has one broad street, in which most of the best houses are built; the rest of it consists in a confused mass of lanes with many waste spots covered with rubbish. The market-place is an irregular space surrounded with wooden sheds, stalls protected by parasols occupying the middle. There are two so-called castles in the north of the town, one in ruins and abandoned, the other in not much better condition, but mounting four guns and tenanted by the few regular soldiers stationed here. The walls which inclose the town, though low and plastered with mud, are strong enough to withstand an attack of Arabs, and even opposed a serious resistance to the Wahabites.

Tayf is not as one would suppose on looking at the map, a part of Arabia: its cool climate, posi-

\* *Vide* Pococke, Specimen Hist. Arab.

tively cold in winter, its abundant streams, pure atmosphere, and the productions of its soil, all are cited to confirm the truth of the tradition of its foreign origin. Tayf is the participle of the verb Tafa (طَافَ), which signifies "to go round;" it is especially applied to the religious ceremony of going round the Ca'aba. When Ibrahim the beloved with his son Ismail rebuilt the Ca'aba, the Archangel Gabriel brought a parcel of land from the Patriarch's native country, Harran, and carrying it seven times round the House of God, deposited it in the place it now occupies, the only portion of his paternal inheritance which the ancestor of the great Arab tribes was to succeed to. It is a pretty tradition, and probably as true as some others.

The next day we took a ride to see some of the valleys in which the gardens of Tayf are situated, principally north-east and west of the town. As we were to leave Tayf by a road which follows the former direction, Sherif Selim, who was charged to act as cicerone, carried us through the Wady Mel-tun, passing not far from the Sherif's palace, which lay to the right. The granite hill on either side closes in broken masses on the road, again to open out, leaving spaces of fertile soil, watered by a narrow but beautifully clear streamlet; along this stream are built many country-houses, surrounded

by trellised gardens, planted with the vine, for which Tayf is famous, and apricot, pear, and pomegranate trees. A few roses are generally planted as a hedge; and large plantations of roses are cultivated for sale, but flowers or ornamental trees form no part of an Arab garden. The three things which delight the eye, says a couplet often quoted, are running water, and verdure, and a beautiful face; but the verdure they delight in is the green of fruit-trees, and the water runs most prosaically in stone-lined or mud canals. Perched on a rock at the entrance of the valley, is a very pretty mosque, in which the Sherif attends Friday prayers. We entered two or three of these gardens, and the empty houses built in one corner of them, without seeing anything remarkable; they were shown to us, I suppose, as belonging to the Sherif. We then rode on to the extremity of the valley, which ends in a plain broad enough to contain a village, and a good many fields. We had on our right the Gebil-el-Borj. The village is called El Wahab (وَهَاب). Here begins the desert of granite and sand, so we turned by the road we had traversed and stopped to luncheon in rather a pretty house, belonging as everything we had seen does, to the prince. It was empty, but a basket of provisions and a carpet had been sent from Tayf, though the entire ride did not occupy more than

three hours. The rest of the day passed listlessly enough, we had already exhausted the curiosities of the place, and the common-places of our visitors, which as our divan was never empty (it is polite in the East to persecute a stranger with a constant relay of visitors), made our stay already seem rather long.

The next day we had our audience of leave, which passed very much as the former one had done, excepting that on this occasion, His Highness saying that it was too fatiguing to talk across the breadth of the room, ordered chairs to be placed in the centre of the room facing his, and made me take one which was placed on his right side. He was thus able to address a few words to me, during the time occupied by the interpreter in translating and receiving his answer from my companion. Little was said of politics, but much of the intended exhibition of works of industry in Paris. Of that in London the prince had read full accounts, and had even undergone a little domestic persecution from his household, who had been anxious to persuade him to send a contribution to it. He was now assured what pleasure it would afford the French to have an Arabian department, at which he smiled, and said that he had nothing good to send but the air and the water, which he feared would not bear

carriage ; that the arts are now neglected in Arabia, and that there is little industry where the life of the people is so frugal and the climate so fine that they have few wants ; and turning to me, he added, " it is otherwise in England, there you have no idlers." Of course, like a good courtier, and a better patriot, I assured him that in England everyone is busy from morning to night, and told him how even the parliament sits ten or fifteen hours a day ; what hundreds of blue books its members are obliged to study in the remaining hours, and what scores of laws they enact—an amount of labour which he seemed to think almost superhuman, and incredible when I added that the members are unpaid. He expressed himself as having been gratified by our visit, and in very pleasing terms spoke of the pleasure we should derive from the recollection of the scenes we had passed through, on our return home, when the tribulation and hardships of the journey would be forgotten, and we should remember only the instruction or pleasure we had found in distant countries. He then spoke of the return to our family, and quoted Arabic verses on the delight of again hearing beloved voices.

I have never seen a more happy combination of affability and dignity than he united in his manners—a rare accomplishment—especially in the East,

where the mean between chilling politeness and boisterous familiarity is seldom attained. What we call cordiality of manner is here almost unknown ; the only great personage I have met who has it, is Abbas Pacha, but he is wanting in dignity, and comparing him with the Sherif, one feels that however pleasing his conversation, the one is a gentleman among gentlemen, the other the grandson of an adventurer. I cannot pretend to offer an estimate of the Sherif's character ; to decry one of whom I heard no single trait of injustice would be unjust as well as ungrateful. In his reception of us he united with Arab hospitality a truly princely magnificence, joined to every flattering attention ; my praise would therefore be liable to suspicion ; but I left him with the impression that he possesses not a few of the qualities which in any country would make a good sovereign. He is said to be strictly just in his relations with his subjects : during the month I spent in the Hedjaz, I heard him accused of no act of violence or oppression, though he exacts implicit obedience to his orders, which once given he never swerves from. The great fault of which he is accused is avarice ; of this vice, however, he gave us at least no reason to suspect him, and when one considers the insatiable greed of the people of this country, his avarice may very probably be only a

well calculated economy, and an unwillingness to bestow upon worthless people gifts for which he knows they would feel no gratitude. At all events this avarice, if it exists, is not grasping. He enters into no trade speculation as so many of the Turkish grandees do, and as his father did before him; he has no taxes to collect; he cannot therefore oppress the people by increasing their contributions unduly: the funds of which he disposes are his allowance from the Turkish Court, 12,000*l.* a year, not regularly paid, and his hereditary fortune, dilapidated by Mehemet Ali and the long exile he was condemned to.

In the afternoon, after we had taken leave of him, I was astonished to receive a message inviting me to return to the palace. I found a mule waiting for me at the gate of the town, and was this time received in a cabinet looking on the garden, in the centre of which the Sherif was standing as if warming himself at a brazier. He sat down on the divan and made me take a seat beside him, and when coffee and pipes had been brought in, the servants withdrew and the doors were closed. His highness had sent for me, perhaps, thinking that I had had less than my fair share of talk, or wishing to ask many questions which he did not care to put in the public divan. He wished to have particular informa-

tion on the state of the war, and the probability of its becoming general ; he spoke of the Anglo-French alliance, whose sincerity or duration he seemed to doubt ; for he understood the interest which England has in supporting Turkey, and knows the offer which Napoleon made of Constantinople to Alexander at Tilsit. Besides this the Indian and Algerine pilgrims give very different accounts of the governments under which they live. He touched on many other matters in which he was interested ; on some of them I could answer his questions, on others he knew much more than I did. After two hours, which seemed very long to me who had retained as nearly as I could what is considered the respectful position, with the legs doubled up while one sits on one's heels, which I have always found an infallible receipt for producing a cramp, he dismissed me with good wishes for my return home.

We were to leave the next day, but as the dromedaries were only to be ready at the 'Asser, we spent the morning in the bazaar, it being market-day. We found it very poorly supplied, the merchandise of all kinds being of the commonest description, and nothing even curious excepting a few articles of Arab dress, and some German carpets of goat's hair, of a manufacture similar to the ordinary camel sacks. Our host afterwards carried us to the top of



his house, the tallest in the town, to enable us to form a just idea of its situation, and this view confirmed me in the impression I had already received of Tayf; its beauty is only comparative, its verdure only bright when contrasted with the arid soil around it; in any other country than Arabia the greater part of its gardens would make a poor enough figure. Its cold springs, its temperate climate in summer, are probably its greatest recommendations, and in both I believe it to be equalled if not exceeded by Heddah at the top of Gebel Karah, where a beautiful and varied view of sea and mountain is enjoyed—a charm of which Tayf cannot boast. The town itself is built in the midst of sand, in which hardly a tree is to be seen in a radius of a mile. The most interesting thing I saw on the top of his house was a large spherical vase, with four small ears or handles round the narrow orifice, whose form and fine black varnish exactly resembled some of the ancient vases called Etruscan. I could not learn whence it had been brought, and I do not think it ancient, though I saw nowhere in the Hedjaz anything in the least like it. It may be Indian, but the family of our host has been settled for seven generations in Mecca.

We were not yet at the end of the Sherif's attentions. Besides sending an immense stock of pro-

visions for the road, the treasurer arrived just before we started to bring us his last compliments, and, with them, parting gifts; the one destined for me being the ornaments for a saddle, embroidered in the same style as the dromedary housings I have described; my companion received two abbayahs, woven with gold thread, a white one for himself and a black one for his interpreter.



## CHAPTER VIII.

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Seat on a Dromedary—Geymah—Neighbourhood of Tayf—Figure cut in Granite—Moslem Prayers—The Camel—Its Virtues—Arab Betrothals—Charms—A Primitive Arab House—Arab Hospitality—Round the Ca'aba—Secure Travelling—The Free Arab.

*March 2nd.*—It was five in the evening when we mounted the dromedaries provided for us by His Highness; and Sherif Hamed told me that he had paid me the compliment of ordering that I should have the one he mounts himself on his excursions among the tribes, saying, "I wish him to know what a dromedary is." I am now becoming accustomed to the dromedary, and already, though a poor rider as I shall have occasion to prove, appreciate the superiority of this mode of travelling over every other sort of conveyance. At a gentle amble, its long neck stretched out in front till the head nearly touches the ground, the dromedary carries his rider almost without perceptible movement, and at a rate of more than five miles an hour. He can cover twice as much ground in this time without any great exertion to itself, but the motion then becomes

unpleasant, as least for young riders. He carries one more agreeably than a carriage, for one enjoys, elevated on his hump, the feeling of liberty which even the driver who must follow a beaten road has not in a carriage, as well as the free air and the commanding view. He is in the long run less fatiguing to ride than the horse, for on his wide saddle, one can change at pleasure the position of one's limbs. The usual way of riding is with one leg crossed over the pummel, the other hanging loosely or hooked to the crossed foot. Thus you can ride all on one side as in a lady's Spanish saddle, or with both legs crossed in front, or hanging down as on horseback. The last is certainly the safest mode, as then the equilibrium is perfect, and one gains a sort of grip; but the more comfortable position is with one or both legs crossed in front; and I suspect my companion who had always expressed himself with the most contemptuous levity of the tailor-like accomplishment of sitting with crossed-legs, found reason if not in the divan, at least on dromedary-back to alter his estimate of its utility.

A well-trained dromedary obeys the rein, the stick and the voice, as readily as the best broken horse. The rein is a rope tied round the muzzle with the knot on the near side; it is held in the left hand, and serves either to draw up the long neck, or to stop

or change the step. A touch on one side of the neck makes it take the opposite direction, a sharp blow on the haunch bone, or the pressure of the heel on the shoulder-blade quickens its pace, and a slight tap on the head followed by a touch on the ears, makes it lower its head and take the quick march by which so much progress is made without perceptible fatigue, either to the rider or his beast. On drawing it up and uttering a guttural sound like gher-r-r-r, accompanied if necessary by a touch on the leg, he kneels down, a process which like that of rising is performed in three movements; first he falls on his fore-knees, then sinks on his hind quarters, and finally settles down. The motion in rising is more formidable, the first movement being a sudden and violent jerk forwards, which, if the dromedary be slow in rising, as is often the case, threatens to throw the inexperienced rider on his neck. There are three kinds of sticks used for driving the camel, the *mesha'ab* (مشعاب) which is a branch of almond-wood cut out of the bough, so as to leave an obliquely inclined head; this is chiefly, but not exclusively used by the sherifs, and as I have already said, in the Prince of Mecca's hand is the symbol of sovereignty; the bark is left on it entire. The *metrek* (مطرق) is a longer and perfectly straight peeled wand; and the *bakur* (باكور), shorter and heavier than the

last, is bent round at the end ; both the *bakur* and *mesha'ab* are held by the straight part.

Our course was northwards through a sandy plain to Shoubrah, the garden and palace of Abdallah Ebn Aoun, son of the intruder, now dispossessed, Sherif of Mecca, who resides at Constantinople, and has been made a Pasha to the scandal of the old Turks, who are shocked at the idea of a *Fellah* being raised to this dignity. Here we were joined by two sherifs who had agreed with Hamed to accompany us a part of the road, and had insisted on our promising to deviate a few hours from our route to spend a day with them. One of them named Mohammed, a remarkably well-informed and clear-headed man, only escorted us to Geymah, an hour-an-half from Tayf, and returned the next morning, having received orders from the Sherif, just before he set out to meet us, to hold himself in readiness next day to start upon a mission into the Nejd. News had just been received of a sanguinary quarrel, which had broken out between the branches of one of the tribes there ; and so great is the authority exercised by the sherifs that no doubt seemed to be entertained that his presence would suffice to restore tranquillity, though to do so by force of arms would demand a body of two thousand soldiers. The long conversation which I had with Sherif Mohammed

this evening, left me many regrets that I had not had an earlier opportunity of seeing him, or that parting I was unable to accompany him on his expedition.

At Geymah, (the hard g represents the double dotted kaf), we were received at the house of a rich Meccan merchant, which contained a long spacious room with windows opening on the four sides. The family who were then residing at Tayf, had come by the Sherif's order to receive us. They were rivals of our former host, and His Highness had, I believe, arranged so that we should stop at their country house to make up to them for the preference we had shown to Abdallah Shems in the town. After we were seated, the younger son of the proprietor brought us handfuls of lemon-flowers from the garden surrounding the house, which he showered upon us, a fragrant welcome, whilst tea was being prepared for us by his elder brother. The master of the house with his brother, sat below the steps of the sort of daïs, on which we had taken our place with the sherifs to enjoy the beautiful view by which it was surrounded. After tea had been served the whole party withdrew, and we were left alone in the large dimly-lighted room till nearly midnight, when two huge platters each filled with rice, on which an entire sheep cut into large pieces was placed, were

brought in. His Highness had, as I have already said, sent us before we started an immense supply of provisions for the road, and we proposed on arriving to have some of them served for supper, and so to sleep. Kindness is sometimes killing, and Arab ideas of hospitality may be ranked in the category. The sheep must be killed and served to the guest, and the gist of the compliment would be lost if it were killed before his arrival; thus half our night was lost to repose, thanks to the well-intentioned but inconvenient etiquette of our entertainers. We had to start early, but before mounting it was only due to our host to visit his beautifully wild garden crowded with apricot trees, and the ever-green lime, whose flowers scented the air. A stream of water runs through it, and traversing a kiosk open on three sides (which reminded me in its disposition of the Ziza near Palermo), fills a large square tank in front of it, and thus forms a delightful retreat in summer evenings.

Leaving at seven we rode on through a country the most beautiful, but said to be the least wholesome, in the neighbourhood of Tayf, till we reached another small village perched upon rocks. Below this, we entered upon a tract of sand covered with shrubs and thorny trees, the road passing among scattered hillocks which seemed built up with large blocks of



granite. By ten o'clock we had reached the ridge from which these blocks appear to have been rolled; the steep descent brought us to the foot of a lower hill, which we then climbed, to descend again by a longer but more easy passage through a valley. The sides of this valley were covered with wild salvia and other sweet smelling shrubs and shaded with trees, among which a red-flowering mimosa, the *nebek*, and the *Asclepias procera*, were conspicuous. On more than one of the dark brown blocks of granite which we passed to the right, I saw Arabic inscriptions scratched on the sun-burnt surface of the stones, but their character was of too recent an epoch to make them worth the trouble of decyphering. Further on to the left on a smooth rock is seen the outline of a seated figure in Egyptian style, with something like a perpendicular line of inscription in front of it. At first sight, I did not think it ancient, rashly judging from the fact, that it is only scratched not sculptured in the granite; this seemed to me to forbid the idea of its being the work of a Pharaonic artisan. A certain roundness of the forms, which I do not remember in the Egyptian sculptures of high antiquity preserved at Turin or London, led me to suspect that it was the handy-work of some of the Frank attachés to Mehemet Ali's army, bent on mystifying future travellers.

But when I afterwards saw the rock-inscriptions at Assouan and Philœ, which are not more deeply sculptured than this, and when I had learned by trial how difficult it is even to make such an impression as this on the granite, no doubt remained in my mind that this is no work of idlers, but a genuine record of Egyptian conquest. In the Beit el Wely at Kalabshah, a seated figure of Rhamses II. remarkably resembling this one in style, is sculptured on the walls, and Wilkinson tells us that the inscription commemorates the conquest of the Shorii, whom he conjectures to be an Arabian tribe. If he be correct, and this monument be one of those commemorative of the victories of Sesostriis, as seems highly probable, the fortified city to which the vanquished Shorii are seen flying in the sculptures of Kalabshah is no other than Mecca, which under the name of Macoràba, existed in very early times, and was then a place of strength, though since the institution of Islam, it has been without walls. The rock is broken away in the part facing the figure, but the inscription though indistinct, seemed to me composed of six round and square characters in perpendicular line, not unlike some forms of Hebrew letters. I saw nothing like a cartouche, but such may exist on the fallen blocks of granite which I was unable to examine; as I had lingered behind the

caravan, and my dromedary was so restless, that I dared not dismount and leave it to its own devices. Granting the Pharaonic epoch of this monument, it might be a curious speculation to enquire how many thousand years it has required to blacken the surface of these rocks on which the scratchings of the chisel made more than three thousand years ago, still look fresh as if the work of yesterday.

Our friend Sherif Hamed was unfortunately no scholar, and I greatly fear from his ignorance of many old things I asked him about, that the old poetic fire, in the neighbourhood of Mecca at least, is burnt out. Perhaps, they take the Prophet's words in a prohibitive sense when he says, "I am sent not to sing you verses but to bring you a revelation." In vain I asked for the locality of Ochad, where the mo'allakas were first recited, the scene of the annual contests of the poets of all the Arab tribes, "whose praise was a crown of bays, and their blame a brand of shame." It is now deserted and silent; I could not even learn exactly where it had been; so that I conjecture there must be a third road from Tayf to Mecca, besides those we have gone over. Hamed indeed, told me that there is one, but said that it is impracticable for any but pedestrians, which Ochad and Wady Nahla cannot have been.

At one o'clock we reached the fountain of the Seyl, a long sandy plain, through which as its name denotes, a torrent flows in winter. Here we stopped to luncheon, and the three sherifs, (for though Sidi Mohammed had left us we had two companions) said their Friday prayers. One of them was an old man upwards of seventy, behind whom on the crupper of his dromedary, rode a tall, straight, intelligent looking boy of his kindred. He had a couple of slaves in his suite, and an old grey mare showing signs of breeding, and said to be of noble blood, which unbridled followed her master like a dog. I have been for long a daily spectator of Moslem prayers, but here, on the soil of Arabia, there was something more than usually attractive in the sight of those three sons of the Prophet, as they spread the sheepskins of their saddles on the ground, and, the old man in front, the two younger ones in a line behind him, took their places to perform their short but solemn devotions. Standing thus in the open temple of nature, the attitude of the Mussulman in prayer, not destitute of humility, bespeaks a manly confidence in the God whom he addresses.

From the Seyl we entered a wide plain called Boheita, and from this a long rather narrow valley, Wady El Yemani, between the hills called Yamusein, those on the right being we were told the frontier of

Tehamah; not the Tehamah of the map to the south-east of Jidda, but as its generic meaning implies, a flat land running to the sea. We met here large herds of she-camels followed by their young, whose long delicate limbs and generally pale colour render them almost pretty. As we passed, one of the men who were driving them brought me a bowl of frothing milk, as sweet and much richer than the cow's. The weather was intensely hot, and though freshly taken the draught had none of that warmth which is so disgusting in fresh milk at home. The servant, a Turk, to whom I handed the bowl after emptying it, threw out the remaining froth, which raised against him a storm of reproach for thus dissipating the gift of God. It was a natural movement to make after draining the bowl, but I had instinctively withheld my hand fearing to do something contrary to the popular prejudice; and I now congratulated myself on having done so when I heard the bitter things said to him; these would not indeed have been expressed to me, but the action would have been ascribed to that utter want of religion, of which the Franks are accused. I have seen an Arab pick up a crumb of bread which had fallen on the floor, and put it in his mouth after kissing it and carrying it to his forehead, testifying the same respect for the *pain du bon Dieu* as the peasants in Brittany, or

those of Franconia, who never cut a loaf without first signing it with the cross. In more civilised countries I fear we have lost, in the neglect of the superstitious observance, the reverential feelings which dictated it.

In the rear of the long train came a man carrying a newly-born camel-foal in his arms. When he reaches the night station of the herd, he will give it back to its mama who will suckle it, and to-morrow it will accompany her when she goes out to feed, its first step in the long course of laborious journeys to which it is born. Hard is the camel's life, but not harder than its master's; and as he enjoys his, so I have no doubt does the camel. It is formed for an existence which no other animal could endure. The cartilage which protects its lips and mouth is insensible to the pricking of the thorny plants which alone grow in the desert, and which are its favourite food; its powerful grinders reduce to a powder the date stones which supply their place in utterly barren tracts. It has a pouch, more than all other ruminants, to serve as a well, so that it can go for five or six days without drinking, and a sense of smell so delicate, that when this provision is exhausted it can snuff from a great distance the spring of water, unknown perhaps to its conductor, or still buried in the sand. The first discovery of Semsem,

the foundation therefore of Mecca, was due to two camels.

One is tired of hearing the camel called the ship of the desert, it is become such a common-place that we have lost the feeling of its poetry, because we cannot appreciate its truth. On the sea of land, the Arab mounted on his dromedary, a skin of water slung on one side, and a bag of biscuits or dates on the other, is more independent of his movements than the mariner on the ocean, for he is heedless of the winds.

The Arab, his country, and his camel are in wonderful harmony with each other. Without the camel, the deserts which contain so many tribes of freemen would be uninhabitable, and one can imagine the camel without the Arab as little as the Arab without the camel. Its large soft eye looks from under its long eyelashes at its master, with an expression of recognition which one can hardly doubt is affection. He talks to it and it seems to understand him; he sings and it quickens its steps, reviving from the fatigues of the way. The genuine Arab never beats his camel, he guides it with his voice, or with a light wand touching one ear or the other to make it turn to the right or the left, or gently tapping it on the crown of the head which it instantly lowers, and breaks into an amble; or if he

wishes it to go still quicker, he presses its shoulder with his bare heel. When he stops, a touch on the knee accompanied by a gurgling sound makes it kneel down. This is a complicated movement, it sinks first on the foreknees, then it bends its hind legs, another movement doubles the foreleg beneath the body, and finally it subsides with an undulatory motion till it rests with its legs doubled up, finding a fifth *point d'appui* in the prolongation of the breast-bone, which, like the knees, is protected by a callosity. It is thus completely at rest. The camel is valuable for its powers of endurance, rather than for the great weight it can carry. A pre-Islamite poet, describing himself and his camel, says,—

“My body can endure everything, but my soul cannot endure disgrace;

I am the son of patience, and the camel is my companion.”

On a long journey the camel cannot carry more than 300 lbs. weight (though for short distances the double), and the light-footed dromedary about 180 lbs.; but both will go for six or even eight days without drinking, and can travel continually for two months together without more than a day of rest in every fortnight. A courier belonging to the Sherif told me, that he often goes with the same dromedary from Mecca to Medina, a distance of 240 miles, in forty-eight hours. The best dromedaries in the



world are those of Oman. The camel is eminently a domestic animal; our dogs and horses can do very well without us, but it is doubtful if the camel could be *happy* without man, it so evidently sympathises with him. It has never been found in a wild state, and the Arab tradition points to this when it says, that it was formed of the same clay as Adam, and that when turned out of Paradise he was permitted to take with him the camel and the date tree.

It was a quarter past eight when we reached Zeymeh, and at our friend Sidi Hamed's suggestion we refrained from entering the village, and bivouacked for the night on the sand. The houses here, and in the other villages we passed are of stone, about ten feet high; their inhabitants are all very poor, groves of bananas being their only wealth. Next morning we only rode half an hour on to Solah, and here we stopped till the 'asser. We spent the day in one of the pretty wild gardens which are the boast of Wâdy Fatmeh, filled with bananas, limetrees, apricots, and a pale bitter orange, of a variety different from the redskinned fruit common in Spain and Italy. A warm spring of clear sweet water with a temperature of 86° Fahr. irrigates these gardens, which lie in a long hollow of the Wâdy. Here, stretched on our carpets beneath the dark green shade of the lemon trees,

beside the rippling streamlet, which has even in some places created spots of turf, it was difficult to believe oneself in arid Arabia.

We were soon visited by two boys, who piled up on our carpet a pyramid of bitter oranges, the least eatable of fruits. One of them, the proprietor of the garden, a youth eleven years old, was a most intelligent child, with large sparkling black eyes, and glossy curling hair which half shaded his forehead, full of talk, and with a perpetual eye to the backshish. He could both read and write, and the signature of his name in my note-book procured him an extra piastre or two bestowed as an encouragement to learning. The other, three or four years older than our host, was his reverse in every respect. The little boy told us that he is his uncle's son, and that in autumn he is to marry his sister, "but," added he, touching his forehead as he smiled, "all is not right here." The other smiled also, and seemed in no degree hurt at the compliment paid to his mental faculties. Half in joke I expostulated with the urchin on the folly of marrying his sister to an idiot; but, the fact of his being his cousin, added perhaps to the argument of two hundred dollars to be given as marriage gift for the bride, on which he laid a stress most edifying in one of his years, were in his eyes sufficiently cogent

reasons to outweigh any objections that might be urged to the match. The alleged idiot was a good-natured vacant-looking boy, with a string of amulets sewed in little square leather bags, slung baldrick-fashion over his shoulder. I asked him what they contained, and he said verses of the Koran ; but his little cousin, who evidently was accustomed to have the monopoly of talk, soon stopped him, and volunteered to tell the authentic story both of his silliness and the amulets.

“This is how it happened. Ali was rather late one night returning home with a camel’s load of dates, and seated on the sacks he was singing to make the camel walk fast, for it was very dark and he was afraid. All of a sudden a tall man stood before him in the road, and laying hold of the camel’s halter, asked him for some of the dates. Ali answered him crossly, saying (in doggrel rhyme), ‘Hold your own, let me alone.’” “Yes!” interrupted Ali, evidently proud of his part in the adventure, “I said to the man, ‘Hold your own, let me alone.’” “As soon as he had said this,” continued our host, “the man let go the halter, but he burst into a frightful sardonic laugh as he sung out, ‘The greedy for his gains, has nothing but his pains.’ When Ali arrived at our house the camel knelt down at the door, but he did not get off till

we went out to him, when we found him laughing hysterically, and unable to answer our questions. We then carried him into the house, and removed the sacks, but instead of dates we found them full of stones. Some days after Ali was sufficiently recovered to tell us what had happened, and we sent him to Mecca to a pious man there, Sidi Mohammed Es-sennusy, who as soon as he beheld him, declared that the being he had met was a Jin, and wrote for him the amulets which you see. Since then he is better, but still he is not quite right." The explanation of the robbery and the natural effects of fear were not perhaps difficult, but we did not display our ignorance or incredulity by questioning any part of the story.

Poor old Sidi Abd el Motaleb had borne the journey in the heat of the previous day wonderfully well, he was always at the head of the caravan, and seemed the youngest of the party; but when we stopped at night he had been seized with fever, which returned more severely this morning. We, therefore, excused ourselves from accompanying him to his house, a few hours to the north, whilst we expressed our regrets at his illness. Again the sheep and rice were served to us, and a little after three, we left the pleasant shades of Solah to pursue our journey during four hours and a half through the

Wâdy Fatmah to Rayan, a large village, and the residence of our friend Sherif Hamed, or of his cousin, during their alternate absence from the kaimakanship of Mecca. To the right we passed the village of Jedidah, lying in a nook formed by the fork of the hills; to the left lies the high pointed hill of Abu Hassaf, and immediately in front of us the long flat line of El Harrah, a mountain four days' journey in length, which cut our course almost at right angles running W. N. W. It belongs to Er-Ruga, a powerful branch of the Oteybah tribe. A historical interest attaches to Gebel Harra, for it was to its solitudes that Mohammed was in the habit, from an early age, of retiring for meditation; and here the first revelation of his mission is said to have been made to him by a voice which said, "Oh, Mohammed, thou art the apostle of God, and I am Gabriel!" In the distance on the right hand we saw another lofty hill, Gebel Hayf, the habitat of the Beni Mesa'ud.

The wâdy then makes a turn to the left leading to Rayan, where we were received in the primitively pretty house of Sherif Hamed, who had ridden on a little before us. It is composed of several courts, one side of each of which is occupied by a single room; the others which complete the inclosure being low walls built of granite, plastered with mud and

whitewashed. I have little doubt that this is the earliest style of house architecture, the Arabs having in the remotest antiquity been divided into nomads living in tents (Ahl el Wabar), and inhabitants of cities or villages (Ahl el Madar). In such a house as this the children of Job were buried by the fall of the walls, and though the solid structure of our friend's house threatened no such catastrophe, it was easy to imagine its possibility. In the first court a single tree, under which the water-jars were placed, grew opposite the door of the reception-room which was given up to us. The ground had been freshly strewn with beautiful granite gravel, and mats and carpets had been spread along one wall; thus giving us the choice of holding our divan in the free air or in the house. The reception-room was some thirty feet long by twelve wide, covered with an immense number of carpets laid three or four deep one above the other, with a double row of cushions all round the walls. Some china was ranged upon shelves, a sword and poniard, palm-leaf fans, and ten small mirrors were placed against the walls. Contrary to Arab habits the room was well lighted with composition candles from Trieste, whence the greater quantity of the immense numbers now burned in the East are imported. Immediately on our arrival a repast of a dozen dishes, with huge bowls of sweet

milk, was served to us ; but this was only intended as a slight refection to keep us in breath till the sheep which had been killed on our arrival should be ready. The mutton was announced after we had done justice to what we thought an abundant dinner, and of course we begged that the labours of the cook should be suspended ; but all we could obtain was a dispensation from partaking of it ourselves. About midnight our servants were awoke, the sheep was served to them, and our host himself accompanied it to see that they did it honour. During the whole journey nothing could have exceeded Sherif Hamed's attentions and solicitude for our comfort. As his guests he overwhelmed us ; everything that could be imagined to render our stay in his house agreeable had been thought of, and, among other Oriental refinements, the new water-jars had been so liberally fumigated with incense as to render the water they contained undrinkable. Great bowls of fresh milk were brought to us in the morning as we awoke, followed almost immediately by an abundant breakfast ; when this was despatched we received the visits of the gentry of the village, relations of our host, who seemed to come in discharge of a duty, for they said little and stayed only a short time. Among them was one fine lad of fourteen, son of Hamed's cousin, his

colleague in the kaimakanship. He was a true Arab, hating the confinement of the city, never staying there more than a few days at a time, and at the earliest moment returning to the scant costume and simple fare of the country. He wore a blue cotton shirt fastened with the leathern girdle, and was distinguished from an ordinary Arab *gamin*, only by the fine quality of the semadah, which was fastened to his head by a sheftah\* of gun match wound four times round it, the usual head-dress of the Hodeylah es-sham. The end of this had been lighted, showing that it served two purposes; and he told us that he spends most of his time in sport. Our host seemed determined that we should conform to Arab customs by eating at no one's charge but his for at least twenty-four hours; for when we insisted on continuing our journey that afternoon, we were again summoned to eat, notwithstanding our protestations, at one o'clock. A platter four feet across, with difficulty borne by two men, was brought in loaded with a mountain of rice crowned by two lambs. When seated at this, with the Sherif and one of his relations, who seemed to join us with

\* The Sheftah (شفتة), called in Syriac, 'Agal, is a skein of camel's wool thread, about nine feet long, bound at distances of about twelve inches with silk and gold thread. It is wound round the kufiah, forming a large turban, and is principally worn by the Aneyseh.



reluctance, our host, to make us eat the more, reminded us that we must behave like Arab guests, who mark their consideration for their entertainer by the quantity they eat. Almost ill from this continual stuffing, and in very bad trim for riding, we left at half-past two, Sidi Hamed remaining behind for two hours longer to do the honours of a second dinner to a party of sherifs who had arrived that morning.

Rayan is a large village containing several stone houses, but the majority of the mixed population, including several families of sherifs and Arabs of different tribes, live in tents formed of mats and brushwood like those in the suburb beyond the Mecca gate at Jidda. The climate of Wâdy Fatmeh is very different from that of Tayf, where the thermometer at seven in the morning stood at 54°; here, even in the morning, we were glad to seek the shade of a wall; and after midday, when dinner was served, the water for washing, which had been standing in copper ewers in the sun, was so hot that my first impression, as it was poured over my hands, was that it had been heated on the fire. In leaving Rayan we took a southern direction through a country, to which the bright green of the Harmal with its white flowers lent a deceptive appearance of richness, and in two hours descended into the wide

plain of Shotan. An hour further we crossed the great Haj route Derb-el-Yemani, and then entered Wâdy Refadah. The muezzin was calling to evening prayers as we rode through the large village of Abu Shehr, lying close to the hill to the right, through which the road passes. At its further extremity is a square castle flanked with round towers in picturesquely ruinous condition. A rich purple haze coloured the large plantations of palms which surrounded the village. As we left it we met large herds returning from the pasture-grounds driven by women and children; and a not silent group of village dames was assembled round the well, lying outside the village. We thought, while riding rapidly on in the deepening twilight, that this was one of the prettiest spots we had seen in the Hedjaz, though its inhabitants enjoy a villainous reputation as robbers. Another equally ill-famed village, Bir Gharith, with a stream of water gushing copiously through its plantations, lies a little nearer the mouth of the valley which we were fast approaching; and debouching from this we reached Haddah the coffee-house, where we had rested the morning after our departure from Jidda, at half-past eight without unpleasant encounter. We had now made the circle round the Ca'aba as effectually as the most pious of Moslem pilgrims to its shrine, though with rather a

wider radius. Received as we had been by the Sherif, it would have been imprudent, as well as a bad return for his hospitality, to have attempted to enter the precincts forbidden to all but the faithful. Discovery there, though attended with little danger to our persons, unless in the first moment of fanatical exasperation, would have greatly compromised the Prince, who would have fallen under the suspicion of conniving at the violation of the sacred territory. For my own part, I have never had any great curiosity to see Mecca, it contains no monument of interest as a work of art, and few if any spots historically remarkable. Such as it is, it has been described, with his usual scrupulous minuteness, by Burckhardt; and a more lively and not less faithful picture of its present condition has probably, before this reaches England, appeared from the pen of Mr. Burton.

On the road from Haddah to Jidda there is nothing to remark, we traversed it this time in daylight, and the burning sun and hotwinds charged with sand, injurious alike to man and beast, made me regret that we had not chosen the night for our return, as we had been forced to do for our departure. But in this, as in everything else, Sherif Hamed had orders to defer entirely to our wishes, and his good-natured compliance with them was

deserving all praise. We had made, as far as lay in the power of the persons to whom we had been recommended by the Sherif, a most agreeable and successful journey for which, I cannot too often repeat it, we are indebted to the kindness of Her Majesty's Consul, Mr. Cole, and the great consideration which he deservedly enjoys. The perfect security which we enjoyed during our journey through a country, which is represented as in almost open rebellion, speaks volumes for the inoffensive character of the people when unexcited by passion, or for the influence exercised over them by the Sherif. I have no doubt that escorted by a single member of his family, commissioned by him to act as guide, there is no part of Arabia in which the French, and especially the Englishman, may not travel with perfect safety; he may pass without apprehension through hostile tribes, sure of finding among all a hospitable reception. The Arabs of the country are probably the least fanatical of Moslemen; on this score he will not be disquieted. Many parts of Arabia are still unexplored, its resources are very imperfectly known, and judging from his own words, the Sherif would be found willing to afford every aid in his power to further the researches of a traveller. The native of no other country is so fitted for such a task as an Englishman; he accom-

modates himself, unaccommodating animal as he is generally considered, more easily than any other European to the habits of the Arabs; a certain coldness in his manners is not repulsive to them. They know something of the power of his country, for they have seen, too rarely, her ships at Jidda, and have heard the tribes of Indian pilgrims, who probably are inclined to exaggerate the power they have succumbed to. They are besides predisposed to respect him by their traditions. When I was told in the deserts of the West, that we Englishmen are Arabs by descent, or that our fathers had a treaty of alliance with the Prophet, I thought the fable was invented at the time to flatter or conciliate me; but I have since heard from men who are learned (in the Arab sense of the word), that we are not only originally Arabs, but Koreish who emigrated under a former dispensation, the polite term for the times of ignorance. This belief may be turned to a good account by future travellers, so I was not so rude as to contradict it. If the Arab have a sort of instinctive predilection for Englishmen, there are many points in his character with which they sympathise. The free-born Arab in Arabia is of a very different character to the bastardised race which crouches beneath the Egyptian whip. Their language is as free, their bearing as independent as

our own, and they resemble us also in our respect for hereditary authority and established right, as well as in the uncompromising assertion of their personal liberty. The virtue they admire the most is generosity, or rather open-handedness; their traditions are full of stories in its praise, and at the present day they omit no opportunity of enabling the traveller to emulate, if he will, the bright examples they can cite to him. But if their craving for presents is shameless, a mere trifle will generally satisfy them, and frequent gifts of small value more readily conciliate their good will, than a single one, worth three times as much, would do.



## CHAPTER IX.

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Sawakin—Its Governor—A useful Rule—Head-dress—Leave Sawakin—Line of March—The Weaver-Bird—Troubles—French Deserters—New World of Botany—Langeb—A roll from a Camel—Gebel Garatât—Feeding-time in the Desert—Sleep under canvas.

LATE in the evening of the 11th of March, we took leave of our kind friends at Jidda, and started to join our luggage which had been embarked on board a sayah, a bark of nearly the same build and dimensions as that in which we had come from Suez. It was originally our intention to sail for Kosseir, but alarmed at the long time which this voyage would require—probably, we were told, twenty days—we had determined upon crossing to Sawakin, and thence making the best way we could to the Nile. The boat in which we started was a large one belonging to the principal, or rather the only European merchant, in Jidda. Before we had gone a quarter of an hour from land we struck upon one of the sandbanks, which render the bay of Jidda so difficult to navigate; and there we lay for nearly five hours, shivering in the bitter cold, and glad to

wrap ourselves in the carpet spread for us to sit on. For some days a violent north-wester had blown a gale down the sea, and although it had in some degree moderated on the previous day, there was still a heavy swell, which rendered the voyage as unpleasant as thirty hours of sea-sickness and drenching could make it. The heavy seas which broke continually over the bows made it impossible to light a fire; our servants as miserable as ourselves were unable to give us any attendance, and there we lay, not motionless, for the tossing was so violent that we had literally to hold on to our almost swimming beds. A bottle of brandy, a stirrup-cup given us by the consul at parting, excellent of its kind, but a poor assuager of thirst, the flat sour bread of Jidda, well soaked with salt water, were all that we could reach, and it was an agreeable surprise at midday on the following day to learn that two hours more would see us at anchor in the snug little harbour of Sawakin. The port is formed by a circular creek, with only a narrow inlet to the east, rendering it secure for the vessels of small burthen which can find anchorage in it. A single glance at the form of the harbour shows that it is a coral formation, with a small circular island in the centre. On this is the governor's palace with a few other stone buildings of recent construction,



and a number of huts neatly enough made of matting. Some are square with a ribbed dome roof formed by the four corner poles tied together; others are oblong and not unlike the hull of a vessel turned upside down. Each hut is surrounded by a dry hedge forming a compound, which serves as kitchen, the fire being kindled in one corner of it, as play-ground for the naked children who sprawl in its dust, and as enclosure for cattle and poultry. On the mainland is another group of such lodges containing a more numerous population, that of the two places probably exceeding 12,000 souls. Sawakin with its small territory on the mainland is under the direct government of the Porte, the authority being vested in a Pasha, subject to the jurisdiction of Jidda. It is supposed to be the Suché mentioned by Strabo, and to be referred to in the Old Testament, where among the troops which Sesac led against Jerusalem are mentioned the Troglo-dytes, called in the Hebrew, Suchim. As a convenient and safe port giving access to the inner lands whence gum, ivory, and slaves have from the earliest period been exported, there is little doubt that it must have been frequented from very ancient times.

The Governor, Noureddin Pasha, a Turk of Reschid's school, is, we may hope, only serving his

apprenticeship in this insignificant post, as he is a man of more energetic spirit than one usually meets with in these countries ; prompt in the dispatch of business, and zealous in improving the condition of the small government entrusted to him. He is a solitary instance, as far as my experience has gone, of a Turkish Pasha who is really popular with his subjects, and against whom I could hear no accusation of peculation or bribery. This may be owing to his having been regularly educated in one of the bureaux of Constantinople under the Grand Vizier's own eye, an initiation into the conduct of affairs, which few of the higher employés have undergone. We were guests in the Serai, as no other house in Sawakin could furnish a couple of spare rooms, and thus during our short stay had many opportunities of seeing him. On the morning when we went to take leave of him, the mejlis or town-council, composed of the notables of the place, was assembled, and we learned that, in accordance with the Tanzimat, which has revived this old Turkish institution, he consults them on all public measures. We were here too short a time to observe its working ; but knowing the cowardly obsequiousness of the Eastern to his superiors, I have been astonished in other parts of the Empire, where I have found it established, to see the check which it

sometimes affords to corruptions far too deeply rooted to be at once thoroughly extirpated.

Sawakin contains a few merchants of some wealth, and a number of traders with very small capitals. There is only one Christian established here, a Greek, agent for Mr. Sawi's establishment in Jidda. We found him exceedingly obliging, and active in aiding us to obtain, on fair terms, the camels ordered by the Pasha; but the short time he has been in the country, and the difference of his pursuits from ours, prevented our obtaining from him much information of value. One fact had, however, in his intercourse with the Arabs struck him forcibly, the primitive simplicity of their fare—milk and flesh; "*Sono brutte bestie, Signore, che non mangiano che carne senza sale, e non bevono che latte!*" He might have added, that the meat is at least as often raw as cooked. We met no other person at Sawakin from whom we could obtain any information, but the director of customs, a very intelligent Abyssinian. We had, however, an encounter, which was odd enough to be worth noting down. As we were walking through the market-place, trying to pick up something characteristic of the country, we were startled by hearing a voice call out to us, "*Comment cela va, mes chers amis?*" It proceeded from a very tattered suit of clothes,

which encased a thin shrivelled old man, with a bright eye. Of course we returned our dear friend's greeting, but quickly found that he had already exhausted his whole stock of French. He proved to be an example of fallen greatness, being no less a personage than the chief executioner of the last Dey of Algiers, and is now living in dignified uselessness at Sawakin.

The day after landing, having had camels and dromedaries promised for the next morning, we removed from the Serai to a tent on the mainland, outside the town, belonging to the Emir Othman, an old man of seventy, whose high-sounding, hereditary title only means that he is the sheich of the camel-drivers. He is a spare old man, and no longer capable of attending to the affairs of his principality, as is too well indicated by the vacancy of his stare; his duties are discharged by his heir apparent, whose tarbouch and sabre are signs of civilisation which augur ill for his honesty. Here I will give my reader the benefit of my experience in the following rule:—

Judge of the honesty of an Arab by his attachment to the ways of his forefathers, and of the probity of an Oriental employé (the rule is equally applicable to Frank employés in the East, Egypt for instance), in the inverse ratio of his wealth.

It was something new to find ourselves in the midst of the naked savages who here surrounded us. They answer the description given of the Troglodytes, whose descendants they probably are, though they, of course, claim an Arab lineage. Tall, slim, active-limbed, with regular and delicate features, they look like animated statues of bronze. Their skin is a deep chocolate-brown, and their heads, which are uncovered, bear a close and thick natural protection of curly hair; in which feature, and in which alone, they approach the negro type. Their only garment is a cotton cloth, about four yards long, worn round the waist, its two ends, which are frequently adorned with broad stripes of crimson silk, being thrown crossways over either shoulder, or wound round the body like a belt. Their sandals of camel hide, are generally made with a long tongue of leather, which falls from the instep over the greater part of the foot. As ornaments, rather than as instruments of devotion, they wear a rosary of wooden beads round the neck, and a bunch of amulets, secured in little leather drums, tied round the left arm, with sometimes the addition of a short knife, whose sheath is fastened to the same string. A wooden skewer, serving as a comb, is stuck in their thick hair, which some wear in a round mop-like crop; but most of them dress it in

long ringlets, falling square from the temples round the head, and reaching over the shoulders; while a toupet of shorter hair on the fore-part of the head, stands straight up over the brow. The ringlets are smeared over with grease, which, when newly put on, gives them the appearance of being powdered; others use a composition of pounded sandal-wood and cloves, kneaded with camel's grease, which gives a yellow colour to the hair. I saw one dandy, whose toupet was thus coloured yellow, while the falling ringlets behind were white.

I must here apologise for the uncouth names, and for the indications of direction and distance, which occur with fatiguing frequency in the following pages. As far as I know, the country I describe has never before been the subject of similar observations, and though I was badly furnished with instruments for such a journey, having had no intention in leaving Cairo, of going over new ground; and the nature of my journey, intended as a mere tour of pleasure, was not such as to allow of making satisfactory observations: I hope that the few indications I am able to give may not be geographically useless. The distances are measured in hours, by which must be understood caravan hours, as I always noted the time occupied by the laden camels, not that which I had myself taken to reach

a given point. An hour is equal to about two miles and a quarter.

I took every pains to ascertain the names of the places, which I have marked, never omitting to write them down at the moment; but notwithstanding these precautions, it is very possible that I may have erred in many of them. It is very difficult to make the rude people we were among pronounce a word slowly enough to enable one to seize all its letters; and it is almost impossible to get them to divide it into syllables. When one repeats after them the word they have just pronounced, the alteration of a few letters in a stranger's mouth seems to them insignificant; *w* is a sound which frequently recurs in this part of the country, and a vowel almost like the *i* in *fight*, but slightly partaking also of the English *a* in *gave*, which I have represented by *ei*. The consonants are always written as in English, and the vowels as in Italian, *g* being hard, as before *o* in *go*. It represents the dotted kaf. Excepting in such words as *sheich*, whose orthography is established in English, I have generally avoided the use of *ch* and *kh*, preferring to represent these sounds by a double *hh*. Where I have been able to obtain the Arabic orthography of a word I have generally inserted it, but in the first part of the country we had to traverse, the language of

the people is not even derived from the same stock as the Arabic, and has never been written. Here, therefore, I have only represented the sounds. I have often, in looking over books of travels and maps, wondered at the discrepancies in names, and at the odd mistakes which occur, but I have now learned to excuse them. We passed, in approaching the Rahat, a hill which the guide repeatedly pronounced Matgerud. It was long in view, and he had frequent occasion to name it. I wrote it, nothing doubting, Matgerud; but having the good fortune, at Abu Harras to meet a person who knew the country, and had some tincture of education, I learned that it is called Omm-el-Gerud, the Mother of Monkeys, from the number of those animals which inhabit it.

We had landed at Sawakin in a state of uncertainty as to the line of route we should choose. Information obtained there determined us to go to Chartum by way of Kassala, the capital of the former kingdom of Tacca. It was represented to us as the longest but most expeditious route—a great mistake, as it turned out, for we should have saved more than six weeks by going by El Muheirif, the capital of Berber; this route, however, procured us a sight of a new and very interesting country. Our camel men were Hadēndoa Arabs, a tribe which



extends from Sawakin to the neighbourhood of Kassala. Two roads exist from the coast to Tacca, the one which we followed by Langeb is the most direct, the other, by Tókka, more southerly, skirts the frontier of Abyssinia. Both are, I believe, equally safe, but that by Langeb is the more beautiful. Noureddin Pasha offered us a guard of soldiers, at the same time that we were assured that the country was quite safe. We declined his offer, and I afterwards regretted it, as our camel men were very troublesome, and a couple of soldiers would have kept them in order.

*March 16th.*—The inevitable delays attending a start made it late before our camels were loaded, and the dromedaries promised for our own riding not being yet forthcoming, we sent on our caravan, and followed them a short time before sunset. Wednesday is proverbially a bad day for beginning a journey, and as far as tediousness and inconveniences of various sorts are concerned, the prejudice was, on this occasion, fully justified. We only made two hours' march through the long plain which extends north and south as far as the eye could reach; this is covered with the thorny vegetation which affords so excellent a pasture for camels, and which the numerous flocks of goats scattered over it in all directions, seemed to find equally to their

taste. The setting sun cast a broad orange light over the plain, tinging the mountains which bound it on the west with red and purple, while to the east, the long line of sea seemed a stream of molten gold. Our line of march was almost due south-west, and with occasional bends more to the south, it continued to follow this course to the end of the journey. From our camp I took the following bearings. The highest point of the long range of Gebel Arkweit, S. 26 W.; Hamub, a lower line of hills in front of it, nearly west (W. 9 S.); Gebel Wáratab, a fine range with lofty peaks, W. 52 N.; and Adaroweib, N. 16 W. Sawakin was visible, N. 40 E. Next morning the thermometer at eight o'clock was 82°—a temperature which we found during these months pretty constant at this hour.

An hour and a half after starting next morning we were abreast of the Hamub, over the lower spurs of which the road passes into a wâdy (Âtedob), through which we travelled for four hours. The rocks are here rose-coloured granite, beautifully marked with pale green, and among them springs a meagre thorny vegetation. At the end of the wâdy two high conical summits (the Taminain) appear to the S.S.E., and turning beneath them we came upon one of those scenes which refresh the eye and engrave themselves for ever in the memory. We

had entered a basin formed by the hills, whose granite sides surround it in a long oval. Its surface was covered with bright green grass, through which a streamlet flowed, issuing from a clump of those beautiful tamarisks (طرفه, *Tamarix mannifera*) whose rough stems and pale blue feathery foliage form such graceful masses. Two Arabs were sitting by the stream, in the shade of the trees; a third, prostrated on the ground, was saying his afternoon prayer; and near them was a herd of many-coloured kine, some standing listlessly in the clear shallow brook, others lying on the meadow lazily chewing the cud. The entire scene was worthy of a Gessner's pen, and had it not been for the dark savages, or the Moor saying his prayers, one might have thought himself suddenly carried back to some pastoral scene in Europe. There was another clump of trees, on the other side of the stream, growing at the very foot of the rocks, and one of them immediately attracted my attention by the singularity of its fruit, which hung like bottle gourds from the slender boughs. Approaching to examine it more closely I recognised the tree as a common kind of mimosa, and what at a distance seemed fruit I found to be a number of birds' nests of the most elegant construction. They were heart-shaped, the point being attached to the end of a bough; the entrance from

beneath forms one of the lobes, the other being the repository for the eggs. The proprietors of these pensile dwellings were fluttering in numbers round the tree,—small brown birds with yellow breasts,—and they uttered plaintive whimpering cries when they saw their nests threatened by the spear of our guide. This clever little architect is the weaver bird. There were nests of last year's build, and nests still older and already decayed ; some were only just completed, and others, again, only just begun. Two slender twigs, about ten inches long, neatly twisted together, and knotted into a hoop, form the framework of these elegant little dwellings. This is hooked to the extremity of a branch, and is retained in its place by the peculiarly recurved thorns of this species of mimosa. After securing one of last year's build I wished to have one in better condition, but the lament which the little birds raised touched my heart, and I desisted, thinking how cruelly I should feel the loss of my tent, though I had no little ones to rear in it. We saw, during this evening's and the next day's ride, many more of these hanging nests, always built on trees of the same kind. On one I counted as many as thirty nests, in all their various stages ; some only just begun, a ring of three or four green twigs hooked to the end of a branch by its thorns ; some of them freshly made, not yet

browned by the sun, and finished with a perfection and regularity surpassing the finest German basket-work; others were weather-worn, and evidently deserted.

The stream which we had seen in the meadow flows down the Wâdy Gwob, which we now ascended, in some places a narrow thread, often lost in the sand, sometimes spreading into a wide shallow sheet. The sides of the wâdy are formed by low masses of granite, from the crevices of which spring a multitude of plants, many of which were new to me. One gigantic cactus, often attaining a height of twenty-five or thirty feet, gave a peculiar character to the scenery. From its trunk, which acquires a thickness of eighteen inches in diameter, spring a multitude of six-edged branches, curving outwards, and then rising straight, like the branches of a candelabrum. Each is crowned by a knot of very small yellow flowers, and the edges are protected by a horny covering, armed with long thorns, which grow in pairs; when pierced a white burning liquor, like that of the euphorbia, of which it is a variety, exudes from the wound. To the right, above the rocks, rises a long range of hills (Gebel Abderrak) at a considerable distance to the west. A little after three p.m., when they reached the first water, our Arabs had unloaded their beasts, meaning to stop

here for the night. We were bird-nesting, and our servants had been unable to make them go on. It was with difficulty, and after much scolding, that I at last made them reload and proceed for another hour or two; but on this day we only made seven hours and a-half, thanks to the delay thus occasioned, though we had been upwards of ten on the road. We stopped at the head of the valley, in a beautiful spot from which a lofty peak, Gebel Mikailôt, lay due N.W., Gebel Waraweh, N. 80 E., and Gebel Nafait W. 19 N.

Next morning we had a further specimen of the impracticability of our camel men; we were dressed and ready for a start at six, and it was nine o'clock before the camels had been collected and loaded. In vain I stormed, threatened, vowed I would ride back to Sawakin for soldiers from the Pasha; nothing had the slightest effect; and from this moment, after making myself hoarse with scolding, and acquiring a splitting headache in the cause, I made up my mind to submit. It was a loss of some days, but perhaps in my secret soul I was not sorry to have an hour or two longer in bed, and more time for dressing in the morning. The backshish was still in our power, and this we determined to withhold. At nine we started, and proceeding up the valley, we soon found ourselves in a series of steep

defiles, up which the road is carried. The Atabayah seems in many places utterly impassable; and looking round on the irregular masses of rock we had climbed over, it was difficult to understand how our camels had carried us thus far safely, or to imagine that the baggage could possibly be brought up without unloading. A shorter, but not less precipitous descent, brought us to a small plain, bounded on all sides by hills, and watered by a small spring. A herd of goats was browsing on the grass-plot which lined the basin; on one corner grew two trees, beneath whose broad shade an Arab woman, with a swarm of little children was lying.

At the foot of the ascent we had joined a Turkish soldier and his guide, who were following the same road with us, and leaving our own guide below to look after the baggage, we went on in his company. Arrived in the valley, he assisted to spread our carpet beneath a tree, and there stretched himself near. A glass of araki was the reward of his obligingness, and soon made him communicative. He said that he was a deserter from the Tunisian service, had been two years in that of the Turks in the irregular infantry; he was now on leave of absence from the frontier post eight hours further on where he was stationed, and had been to see his brother who had come to Sawakin to carry him home. He was tired

of a service where he only gained forty-five piastres a month, and would have returned at once, but that the paymaster was seven months in his debt, and that the Pasha had promised to see him paid, and to give him his discharge in another month. He said that his regiment contained nine spahis from Algeria, one of whom was in garrison with him, the others were at Sawakin. It is a pleasanter life, he said, than the French service, for there is little to do; but he and his companions all regretted the change from forty-five francs to as many piastres, and these very irregularly paid. I asked him how, after deserting, he could venture to return to Tunis; upon which he told me that the commander-in-chief, a cousin of the Bey, never punishes deserters who return voluntarily, contenting himself with sending them back to their regiments. The tree we were seated under was, if such a tree exist in botany, a tree-aloe; from every joint of its round twisted boughs, a tuft like an aloe-plant grows. It produces a berry eaten by the camels, and its fibrous leaves furnish materials for rope-making. Its Arabic name is *tombat*. Another plant which was new to me grew near this, for which I could learn no name. Its leaves, not unlike those of the chestnut in shape, are of a cloth-like texture, its stem furry and armed with small thorns; its round



bitter fruit half inclosed like an acorn, in a horny cup, is used by the Arabs for tanning. Lizards, beetles, creeping things, and insects of, to me, new forms, appeared on every plant and beneath every stone. It was a new world which we had now entered. Up to this point the vegetation as well as the appearance of the country and the structure of the rocks had been identical with those of the Hedjaz. These did not now disappear, but another and more vigorous creation had been superadded to them.

Riding W.S.W., we ascended the long, but not steep pass of Haddameib, and reaching its summit found ourselves, after an insignificant descent through Wâdy Gabut, on the edge of an immense plateau covered with bulbous plants and shrubs. In the midst of this plain, Baramiah, four-and-a-half hours from the spring where we had halted at mid-day, we stopped for half-an-hour, and I marked our position by the following hills which arose round us. Gebel Okôm due N.N.W.; behind which lies Okwâo, a military post. Arbab, a single hill, S. 10 W. and the long range of Gabab, running from S. to S.E. There were hills near us to the S.W., Gebel Ankwib, towards which our course was directed during four-and-a-half hours longer, bringing us to a grassy plateau surrounded by low hills, beautifully

dotted with a variety of trees, some of them overgrown with different kinds of creepers. There was one forming a large bush, like a gigantic broom, with green glossy stalks furnished with small thorns, curved backwards, at whose insertion grew a delicate scarlet flower, not unlike a diminutive monk's-hood. Of the creepers the most extraordinary was a four-sided, jointed plant, which bears small leaves and berries; it hangs in long thick cords from the branches, at last hiding, and often breaking down with its weight, the tree up which it has climbed. It is called the Selalah سلاله; its green branches beaten into a paste are applied as a cure to the saddle-galls of the camel. This plain, as well as the hills all round, is called Subab, excepting only the lofty peak of Arbab, which was here S.8'E.

We now reached a long gentle ascent over ground generally bare of vegetation, and covered with fragments of blackened granite, in places clothed with tufts of wiry sharp-pointed grass, and dotted with trees, whose thorny branches growing in the form of an inverted cone were still bare of leaves though covered with diminutive sickly-looking flowers. This mimosa, which resembles the Sănt in leaf and flower, though differing in the form it affects, its white thorns, and its narrow twisted seedpods,

is called the Sayal سَيَال. We had now reached a lofty plateau, to which the Sawakly (people of Sawakin) come to pasture their cattle during the rainy season. Some magnificent trees in groups cast an ever-welcome shade over the parched ground, and stretched under these we found a few tents formed of mats, belonging to Hadendoa Arabs. A boy was tending a flock of sheep, for one of which our commissariat in vain made a bid. A few women were seated before the tents grinding corn, but made a hasty retreat when they saw us. A knot of travellers was reposing under a tree in the neighbourhood; they also showed no inclination to enter into friendly communication with us. We seemed to have grown intensely unpopular. The sky was clouded, the sun pale but glowingly hot, and we thankfully took the only good thing the place seemed to afford—shelter in the shade. •

The remainder of this day's journey was continued up a gently sloped plateau, but we had left behind us the vegetation which enlivened the early part of our route, and found now only sand covered with dark fragments of granite. Our camp was pitched for the night in the plain Saballat, only six hours from our starting place; the peak Arbab was here seen due N.E., another hill Ginhirob N.25'E., and a long hill Sabadinah, running from E. to S.

*March 19th.*—The country we traversed is an immense series of gradually ascending plateaux, whose soil is, for the most part, barren gravel, and we had now reached such a height that the few hills visible on the horizon look like mere hillocks. From out the sand the granite rises in round-backed masses, and almost the only plant in this neighbourhood is the melon-shaped Henda (Coloquint), whose large green fruit, often six inches in diameter, lies on the sand, in which its stem and withered leaves are buried, tantalising the traveller, who has perhaps been thinking how much he could enjoy a water-melon. The Arabs on the coast extract from it, by boiling, a tar for their boats. Towards evening, eight hours from Saballat, we entered a pass where a few trees of a brighter tint than we had yet met with attract the eye, and where the green bushes and tufts of grass attest the presence of water. By degrees as one advances the vale is seen dotted with doumpalms. This is the commencement of the country of Langeb, through which we passed during the following days; it is thickly peopled by the Hadendoa Arabs, but as they avoid pitching their tents on the line of passage, we saw only a few of them from time to time. They are so timid, or have been so often the victims of the rapacity and violence of the Egyptian soldiers, that the sight of

us was the signal for a general flight; men as well as women and children left their flocks, or their laden donkeys, when they saw us, rushing to hide themselves in the hills. This is really a beautiful succession of gorges; the hills of Langeb (Langai in the maps) rise in a variety of fantastically jagged ridges on either side, their bases being clothed with a rich fringe of doum-palms and other trees. Five hours from our last halting-place at the entrance of Langeb, we reached a well (Bir Walo?), at which an immense number of sheep and kine were being watered. Our guide left us to get milk, and I rode on to seek out a shady tree for the mid-day repose.

I here had an opportunity of learning by experience what a fall from camelback is like, a subject on which I had often speculated when astride on the bad packsaddle, I had, *faute de mieux*, procured at Sawakin; it gave my head an elevation of ten feet from the ground. While reconnoitering for shade I had pushed into a thicket of trees and imprudently approaching too near a nebek-tree to gather some of its fruit, an insipid sort of crab, my camel probably attracted by the shade, passed on under it. Fearing my eyes might suffer from its sharp thorns, I threw myself backwards, raising my arms as a protection, when a strong branch caught

my well-secured kufiah, and Absolom-like drew me from my seat; but my kufiah had not so good a hold as his long hair, and instead of remaining suspended from the branches, I came head-foremost to the ground. Luckily it was soft sand, and I escaped, more frightened than hurt, with no greater injury than a few scratches on the head and hands, and a headache for the next day or two. I have ever since religiously respected the too near neighbourhood of thorny trees when on camelback, for the bridle is quite insufficient to hold in a camel which has a will of its own. I shall never again, till I see them in Paradise, where they are thornless, long to gather nebecks for luncheon.

Our guide had been successful in his foray, for he brought us a large bowl, woven of doum-leaves and plastered inside with what looked like mud, full of foaming milk, which was excellent, notwithstanding the doubtful-looking ware in which it was presented. One learns not to be easily disgusted in travelling in these countries. He had obtained it from the Arabs at the well,—“Saket,” as he said, that is gratis; but we insisted upon paying for it, fearing that if we adopted the old Turkish system of taking (taking not accepting) presents, we should soon be able to obtain nothing either for love or payment. The idea of paying was, however, foreign to our

guide's order of ideas; in fact he could hardly be brought to comprehend such a theory, and I often afterwards heard him repeat to his friends the explanation I gave him, that it is disgraceful for the strong to take from the weak. The fact, however, is, that these Arabs have little acquaintance with money, knowing only the Austrian dollars of Maria Teresa, called Abu Nuktah from the dots on the coronet, and an old Egyptian piastre of Moham-med Ali's early years, called the Hadideh. Even these they regard with great mistrust, being, as the Mudir of Kassala afterwards told me, (and he no doubt understands the value of words): "Mere bulls, useless fellows who have no money; if they get two dollars they go and buy a cow with it,"—that is, I suppose, they do not rush to pay it into his treasury. Our guide's description of them was still quaint. "They will give you as much milk, as many sheep, as you please for nothing, but they will not take money; they are sheer robbers." We soon learned, that here robbers stands for robbed. After all, their wants are very few; they make the mats of which their tents are formed of the leaves of the doum; skins serve them as recipients for water, milk, grain; a skin round the loins is generally their only covering, or at most a strip of cotton; a leathern buckler serves them for

defence, their arms are the coarse clumsy spears made by themselves, to which some add a long straight sword, the blade of German workmanship, with a cross handle, resembling that of Godfrey of Bouillon, which is preserved at Jerusalem. Add to these the unfailing wooden skewer in their long hair, sandals cut out of a piece of hide, and the little bunch of amulets on the left arm, and it will be found that the entire costume of the greatest dandy among them, arms and all, is hardly worth three dollars. Their *batterie de cuisine* is not very extensive; the knife, which they wear tied to the arm, is all they need to assist them in greedily devouring entrails, heart, liver, and flesh; without cooking, salt, or pepper, nay even without washing.

Leaving the well, we continued up the wooded pass following the water-course, with a strong north-east wind blowing behind us. This I suppose to be the prevalent wind here, as though we were still ascending, I saw at the foot of all the large trees a collection of drift-wood, and fallen branches, such as a stream would deposit round their trunks, but which all lay in the opposite direction to that which the torrent takes; hence I conclude that the north-east wind must be here both constant and violent. Approaching the upper end of the wady,



Gebel Garatât is seen on the left, and in front Ikit, a pass at the top of which the watershed changes, taking the south-westerly direction. Four hours and a half through a thick wood of doums brought us to the line of the watershed, and here we encamped by a small spring, also called the Ikit. Gebel Garatât lay N. 55' E. Its barren sides with rugged broken crests rise bare and almost perpendicular above the lower hills, which are clothed in an abundant vegetation. Our night station was a terrace of sand surrounded on three sides by tufts of doum-palms, many of them festooned with a thick but delicate drapery of clematis; along the fourth side ran a streamlet nourished by the spring, and over it large hawks continually hovered, ready to pounce upon the little birds which came in the evening in vast numbers to drink. Our camels were going to sup, the first time they had enjoyed "a regular meal" since our departure. In general they were turned out on arriving to pick up what they could find; to-night probably there is not much nourishment fit for them in the neighbourhood, they must therefore be fed. Our guide is an elderly man, the least uncouth of our camel-drivers; he has three camels in the caravan, and it was amusing to see his preparations for their evening's entertainment. The table-cloth, a circular

piece of leather, was duly spread on the ground, on this he poured the quantity of dourrah destined for their meal, and, calling his camels, they came and took each his place at the feast. It is quaint to see how each in his turn eats, so gravely and so quietly, stretching his long neck into the middle of the heap, then raising his head to masticate each mouthful; all so slowly, with such gusto, that one would swear it was a party of epicures sitting in judgment upon one of Vachette's *chefs d'œuvre*.

This night was one of the pleasant ones we passed on this journey. We lay stretched on carpets before the tents, and the dry wind whistled wildly through the tops of the palms; the night birds of prey were screeching from among the bushes, coveting perhaps our still well-stored hen-coop; the chacals howled in the distant bushes, while the flame rose in flickering flashes from our well nourished camp-fire. It was about the hour when at home the curtains are drawn close, the bright coal fire in the polished grate throws out a powerful and genial heat, round which the ready circle is formed, while waiting the summons to dine. Perhaps at this moment there is talk of the wanderer, conjectures as to his whereabouts and occupation, pity for his exposed situation, called forth by the shrill gusts which howl in the chimney, and the heavy sleet

and rain, which are battering the windows. The soft carpeting, the brilliant lighting, the lazy lounging chairs of the drawing-room; the cloth curtains, hot plates and iced champagne of the dining-room are certainly not his portion; no opera, no assembly, will occupy his evening, but then he has no long oilette to make; a basin of water from the brook is all that he requires, and in the white clouds blown from his nargileh he sees many a distant, perhaps some loved object with whom, communing in long reverie, he passes pleasantly enough the time that must elapse before he hears the not unwelcome announcement that dinner is served. One dines in the desert, or at least contrives to persuade oneself that one has dined. Soup made of the lamb begged or stolen, I am still uncertain which, this morning at the well; dried vegetables or macaroni form a garnishing to the bouilli, a brace of partridges or katta' (sand-grouse) knocked over during the day's ride, supply a salmi; and the lamb, a not despicable dish of cutlets and a roast. A piece of gruyère, one of the few good things which Switzerland produces, a few glasses of wine, of which one is economical in a journey which threatens to be three times as long as was intended when laying in the stores, and a cup of coffee such as is only to be had in the East, complete a dinner which, in the

absence of better, seems good ; and after a couple of pipes, a light and refreshing sleep under the canvas roof is more welcome than the lively strains of the orchestra or the chilly stuffiness of the "reception."



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## CHAPTER X.

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Hodie mihi, cras tibi —A Tree on Fire—How Arabs snuff—A Fiery  
Sun—Felâti Pilgrim—An Hysma howls—A Cock crows—A  
Sporting Country—The 'Osher Tree—The magnificent Durrah  
—No fear of Robbers.

EARLY in the morning the loud cries of "Ya Sheich 'Abd-el-Kader El Jeilany," the patron saint of camelmen in all this country, announced the first preparations for a start. The camels are collected in a group. By the side of each his load, well corded, is placed; the pack-saddle is then put on "in the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate," and the loading commences with loud cries and squabbling, and no small expenditure of time, when one has to do with such men as our Hadendoa; the work would be silently performed in a quarter of the time by the Ababdeh. The operation is, however, never completed in a manner satisfactory to the camel, which shows its discontent sometimes in attempts to bite, sometimes by rising suddenly, so as to throw the half-fastened load to the ground, always by angry growls, which it interrupts occa-

sionally to chew the cud in its peculiar mumbling way. With its projecting under-jaw, irregularly set teeth, wrinkled chin and bleared eyes, I never look at a camel when thus engaged, without being reminded of some old hag.

We now descended the Wady Ikit, and then came to a new succession of short passes, barren of vegetation, excepting a few thorns; each of these brought us out upon a plateau equally destitute of plants, but all fringed with a more or less distant line of doums. In one of those passes was a large cemetery, for the Arabs as constantly choose their last resting-places near a road, as they avoid approaching it during their nomad existence. There was an open grave, invitingly placed on the first row, as if waiting for the next comer. I immediately thought of the religious Orders in Europe, which always have a grave thus accommodately ready, and at once prepared to make a note of so edifying a custom among the Hadendoa. Before doing so, like a conscientious traveller, I asked the guide for an explanation, which, when given, differed slightly from my version of the story. A man in the neighbourhood was lately sick, and his friends, auguring the worst for him, obligingly had his grave prepared: they did not, however, as we sometimes do in Europe, carry their attentions the length of burying him alive;

he in the meantime recovered, and the grave which was to have been his is entirely at the service of whoever may require it. These graves are covered with oblong heaps of stones about a foot high: along the ridge of many of them a quantity of white salt, sometimes of white pebbles, is heaped up.

Four hours and a half from Ikit we reached a lofty but not extensive plateau, which is entered by a defile, where the granite assumes the appearance of regular building, like a Cyclopean wall on a gigantic scale. Passing out of this the rocks appear in still more fantastic shapes, and on the plateau itself is an *enceinte* of black masses, looking exactly like the fallen walls of a city, with larger heaps, which might be thought to mark the places of the towers at almost regular intervals. We made only eight hours this day, and eight hours of the following were occupied in crossing a succession of almost treeless, featureless tracts of sand. We then came to a black basaltic defile, down which we rode, its steep turns opening into a vast plain, which stretches, full of verdure, to the east. The hills which bound it look in the distance calcareous. To the left rose a lofty hill of basalt, round which we rode for another half hour, to the Wady Araft, and alighted near a well. Our tents were already pitched in a doum

grove, and a number of young men who had been watching the, to them, curious operation, came forward on my arrival with a loud "Es-salamo aleikom," the constant greeting among Mussulmans, but which I had never heard addressed to persons known to be Christians until our arrival at Sawakin, a proof how rarely a Christian is seen in these parts. We were just in time to see the dry branches that hung around the uncultivated doum, under which our cook had imprudently made his fire, flare up, and in a moment the whole tree was in flames. With the help of our young friends, who showed themselves very ready to assist, and some vigorous strokes of the axe, the fire, which at one moment, owing to the high wind, threatened the whole plantation—and of course our luggage, which was in the midst of it—was subdued. This is the boundary of the country called Langeb. The basaltic mass of Gebel Hambulib lay due north of us, and Gebel Wabayab N. 70' E.

*March 23rd.*—Leaving the grove of doums, we ascended for a short time, and in half an hour reached a formation of white basalt and porphyry, the latter, as far as one could judge from the broken fragments, of a very bright red with small white spots. Crossing this hill the road lay for the rest of this march over the open plains of Wady Magwar,



which are intersected by shallow ravines of sand filled with trees. Towards evening we saw, far to the left, in the grey distance, the long, apparently lofty, range of hills called Gebel Kuarib, under which the Tokka road to Kassala passes. The plain in which we slept, nine hours and a half from Hambulib, is called Wady Weidi, where we encamped not far from a large settlement of Arabs, one of whom, a sort of half-foolish hermit, came to see us. He told us he was a Taleb, that is, a seeker after divine science; he had learned to write, and with his finger on the sand spelt me the names of some of the places we had passed. He had the soft veiled voice which I have remarked in several men of his class, and his gentle manners were a striking, as well as favourable contrast to those of the wild beings he lives amongst. I offered him a small quantity of tobacco, here called tombak, to smoke; but in common with all the Arabs of this country, he only takes snuff. This they carry in a small hollowed nut, and take it in a fashion which I recommend to European amateurs as rather less dirty than the usual one. A large pinch is shaken out on the back part of the hand, between the thumb and forefinger, in the same way as the Highlander administers to himself this luxury, and it is then chucked, not up the olfactory canals, but into the mouth, and swallowed

without chewing. As nitre is added to the leaf which the Western Arab chews, so here they mix the ashes of the wood fires with their snuff, and one seldom passes the place where an encampment has been, without seeing the camel men turn aside to gather the ashes of the dead fires. The journey of the next day over Wâdy Ambureib to a line of doums with a well, Bir Gadomeyb, though only four hours and a half, was one of the most fatiguing we had yet endured. There was no shade to ward off the sun, and the wind, a strong north-easter, blew, alternately, cool and burning blasts of great violence; the sky was a deep blue, with long switchy streaks of white cloud. A few cows, tended by a couple of handsome straight-limbed boys, were near the well. They brought us a small skin of milk, and I gave them a piastre to refill it, about ten times its value. They went away and soon returned, saying that they were unable to get more milk, at the same time offering to return the money. The richest fellah in Egypt would not have done so. The thermometer at midday was 99° in the shade of the palms; at two o'clock it was 101°, and in the course of the journey I had occasion to observe that here, as in other countries, this was always the hottest moment of the day, though the sun was often more sensibly oppressive about ten, A.M. Leaving the well, we

crossed an immense sand plain covered with boulder-like stones, stretching on the west and south to the horizon. To the north lay the hills we had left behind, their summits only peering above the edge of the high table-land; and to the east a long range of variously outlined mountains, some of them of conical form, and apparently very high. We slept in a thin group of bushes, two miles from the wells. Next morning the wind still blew strong from the north-east, whistling shrill, though not cold, through the thin bushes, and shaking our tents like a winter blast, while a flight of ravens, attracted by our kitchen, circled with loud croakings overhead. From this place the journey, for sixteen hours, is over an immense savannah, on which grew only one solitary tree, about five hours from the starting-point. The ground was covered with long parched grass, and full of crevices, showing the abundance of the waters which, in the rainy season, about two months hence, deluge the country, and convert it into a green prairie, like a rice-field. The sun, added to the hot parched air, was very painful. The closely-wrapped kufiah afforded the face and lungs some protection from its effects, but the heat was so intense that the left, the bridle, hand was burned in white transparent blisters, as if by the contact of fire, though the thermometer did not exceed 102°.

A gray haze hung upon the horizon, in which the trees of the Wâdy Fagudédol, a long way to the west, seemed to float like ships on a sea, the distant hills having the appearance of sea-girt rocks and islands. Next morning we were fortunate in a fresh cool breeze to continue our ride across the treeless *atmur* or desert. We were to reach water and shade, and I eagerly pushed forward my reluctant dromedary. In less than four hours I reached the wells of Bu Sheinah, while the caravan was six and a half in arriving, but I thought I had never made so long a ride. Every moment the sun grew more powerful, the air hotter, and the trees towards which I was hurrying, seemed to recede. One of the peculiarities of the atmosphere in a very wide hot plain, is its magnifying power, so that small bushes acquire, at no great distance, the appearance of large trees, and yet so perfect is the illusion, so eager the hope, that each disappointment serves only to spur on to further exertion and renewed deception. The wind not only blew burning blasts, from which one had to protect the face with as thick a muffler as from a northern ice-wind, but also raised high columns of sand, of strange fiery colour, which swept slowly whirling across the plain, as if about to disclose one of the *jîn* of the Arabian Nights. The ancients observed these phenomena as the Arab story-tellers

have since done. "In those climates," says Diodorus Siculus, "the air seems filled with gigantic figures of strange and horrid monsters, hurrying in pursuit of each other. Those apparitions, though alarming to foreigners, are looked upon by the natives with indifference." My guide and I saw the same moving columns of sand whirling, as if in hot chase of each other, across the plain; but to him they were but hot blasts pleasanter at a distance than near, to me they brought, if not alarm, the memory of a hundred fantasies. At last a thicker group of trees did not sink into the earth as I neared them; camels grazing beneath them gave the first sign of life I had perceived; my impatience or perseverance was satisfied. I had all this time resisted the temptation to drink of the small water-jar suspended at my saddle, knowing how little it contained, and that the more one drinks the more imperious become the calls of thirst. Hardly able to speak, I rode up to a thorn-bush, round which the pack-saddles and loads of the camels were littered, with their owners sleeping in the midst. One of them raised himself at my approach, and calling out to him for water, almost the only word of the Hadendoa language I possess, he pointed to a further group of trees on a low terrace on the other side of a small plain. Here I found a great number of wells, with large herds

of kine gathered round them ; I dropped from my dromedary, without taking time to make him kneel down, and a man reaching me the round skin with which he was drawing water for his cattle, I literally buried my face in the not clear, but grateful fluid. Then looking for a tree which cast a narrow shadow, I stretched my carpet beneath it, and sat down to enjoy the second luxury of the climate, shade. I was hardly seated, when a black soldier, who had been resting under a neighbouring tree, came up, and squatting on the ground at the end of my carpet gave me the good-day, and asked me the news from Jidda. He was accompanied by a slave and a guide, whom he immediately despatched to bring me a large bowl of milk, to which he offered to add biscuits from his own store. After taking this kindly care of me, he left me to enjoy alone the welcome luncheon I owed to him, while he returned to finish his nap on the sheepskin of his saddle. I was presently accosted by a man, not differing much in appearance from the other Arabs, who came to enquire of me the state of the roads to Sawakin—where water, where Arab tents were to be found. He was a Felâti pilgrim, on his way to Mecca, and had arrived thus far on his journey, after traversing Bornou, Bagharmi, Waday, and Darfour. It was nearly a year since he set out

and he had made the whole journey on foot; the desert which scares us had not frightened him, but he seemed to look forward with awe to the sight of the salt sea, and with dread to the idea of trusting himself to its waves.

This place contains a long line of wells, many of them within 20 feet of each other, which serve to water herds of many thousands of cattle. Near each is a circular basin, with a raised rim of mud about a foot high, which the herdsmen fill every evening, probably to avoid so laborious an occupation in the heat of the day. The wells are circular, about 20 feet deep, dug in the sand, which is propped up by boughs of trees, neatly enough and solidly bound together. The herds are driven to the wells each morning by herdsmen, whose shrill whistle they obey with wonderful docility. It is curious to see them following him leisurely, and in long line, till the foremost scents the water; off he then scampers, throwing his tail and heels with great clouds of dust into the air; the whole troop rush madly after him, while the herdsmen themselves, who have now lost all command, run on at full speed to reach the basin before the first. Into this they jump, and begin lustily dealing about blows of their short bent sticks to promote order and secure to each his fair share. The cattle are short-horned, small, but beautifully formed, and

marked with every variety of colour. They are worth from two to three dollars each. When the herds retire, the wells are visited by other guests—vultures, ravens, turtle-doves, and all kinds of smaller birds come in numbers to suck up the moisture which remains. From here for three days' journey we crossed a country of the same nature as this, everywhere green, covered with trees and fields of pasturage, and presenting many groups of wells like these. An immense sheet of water, probably nourished from the mountains of Abyssinia, subtends the whole country. Two hours beyond Bu Sheinah, where our camels had been watered, we encamped in a plain thickly overgrown with large aromatic plants of absinth. To the left, at no great distance, was a hillah or Arab village, which we did not care to approach; and close at hand were the fires of some tents whose inhabitants we did not see, though we heard their voices in the still of the evening.

As night closed in, the neighbourhood resounded with the howling of hyænas and the yells of jackals. It was late before I turned in, and I had hardly got to bed when the whole camp was thrown into consternation by the loud howl of a hyæna, which had ventured to steal close up to us, probably attracted by a sheep purchased the previous morning, and which was tethered near the fireplace. The sheep



began to bleat piteously, and the camels to growl; their proprietors imitated them, and our servants prepared for battle. Kasim, of whose courage at sea I have already had occasion to speak, was not I suspect among the foremost to affront the foe, but he was loudest in his exhortations to fight him. The hyæna after causing the alarm had probably made off, or was not to be seen in the thick herbage, but Kasim seemed to think that a shot into the darkness would be of use, and he was urgent in his entreaties to Monsieur Iskander to "fire for the love of God." This somewhat alarmed me, as all the servants being armed, I thought that a shot ill-aimed was as likely to hit me in my tent as the wild beast in the thicket, and I called out to stop the action, while I heard the loud orders of my companion to have a sack, or a box, or anything placed in the doorway of his tent, by way, I suppose of a hint to the hyæna that he was not in a costume to receive company if she were inclined to pay him a visit. The hubbub was at last stilled, a watch was set, and I had just dropped off into a half-waking slumber when I was roused by the most horrid noise I had ever heard. From what beast of prey it proceeded I could not conjecture, but from its close proximity and startling roar it was evidently of the most daring and ferocious kind. I thought of our sheep, but still more of the risk of

a chance shot, so I called lustily out to ask where was the beast? who was on guard? and why he had not let fly at it? The watchman I suspect had been asleep, but the whole camp was quickly roused, one said he had heard nothing, another that the sheep showed no signs of fear, which proved there was no wild beast in the neighbourhood, a third had heard the roar, but the sound came from a distance. It was of course long before I fell asleep again, having been thus wakened in my first slumber, but it was not long before I heard again a sound which I recognised as the same which had disturbed me. The hen-coop had by some chance been placed near my tent, exactly at the head of my bed. The solitary cock remaining in it, a Cairene, and no doubt hoarse from his long travels, was the cruel murderer of my sleep. I kept my own counsel, said nothing about my discovery, and did my best to sleep notwithstanding Chanticleer's continued persecution.

The next morning, an hour and a half after starting, we reached a village of straw huts, each a circular drum, with conical thatched roof. The village was called Fillik; though this I believe is rather the name of the whole tract of country we were now entering upon, its meaning being "populous," "many,"—an epithet applicable to this tract in opposition to the Atmur we had lately crossed, but

hardly so to this poor hamlet. After this we passed three groups of wells, all surrounded by innumerable herds of kine and sheep. The country is well wooded, principally with varieties of gummiferous trees, and the 'osher (*Asclepias procera*), which grows here to a height of 25 feet; and with a tree in general appearance not unlike the caroub, whose fruit is a berry which, with the leaves, is greedily eaten by the camel.

In seven and a half hours we arrived at a very large village, Elmit Kenab, the most populous in the country and one of its principal markets, governed by a Kashef, dependent on the Mudir of Kassalah. He was living in a straw hut, surrounded by a large compound, in which he received the visit we thought it right to make him, learning that he was going to furnish a guard to watch our tents during the night. A few carpets on the ground and a couple of Gothic-looking chairs with narrow high backs, the seat a net-work of raw hide, formed the simple furniture of this open air divan, but the glass of *eau sucrée* he gave us seemed the most delicious beverage I had ever drank, and as such deserves an honourable place in my journal. Since starting from the last well some hours before, our water-bottles had been empty, the thermometer at 2 o'clock was 108°, and on arriving at our tents which had preceded us,

no water was to be had. It was perhaps to drink his sherbet rather than to see himself that we made the Kashef so speedy a visit, and our ready condescension was rewarded. The Kashef was a frank rough soldier, the commander of 40 irregulars, and for the time nearly supreme in Elmit Kenab, for in these distant out-stations, provided the governor of the province be kept in good humour, there is little check upon the actions of his subordinates. He told us that there is a good deal of sport to be found in the neighbourhood; lions are sometimes killed even within the precincts of the village; ostriches—a pair of which were stalking about his court—are very common. Giraffes are found in great numbers in the surrounding country, and a few days before our arrival three elephants had been killed out of a herd of twenty. He had himself gone to see the sport, which, as he described it, must have been tame enough. Near a well where their footsteps had been tracked, a large pit was dug and covered over with a layer of durrah stems. The Arabs lay in wait concealed among some bushes, till the elephants came to drink, when they raised a wild whoop, which alarming the elephants made them turn in the direction opposite to that whence the sound came; some of them fell into the pitfall that had been prepared for them, and thus imprisoned were quickly despatched by the

long lances of their assailants. Young giraffes are frequently taken alive, and are sold for about 20 dollars a-head. It is here a popular belief that they are the camels of the *jin*, who may be seen in the moonlight nights coursing through the desert on their backs. I do not pretend to place implicit belief in the story, but several witnesses, all men of veracity according to the standard of this country, agreed in testifying that they had themselves seen, on giraffes which had been killed, the bare places worn by the saddle, and sometimes even the mark of the mysterious owner.

This place, once the most considerable in the kingdom of Tacca, was eleven years ago the scene of a massacre by order of Achmed Pasha Menikli, in revenge for an attack on a party of Egyptian soldiers stationed here. After surrounding the village he proclaimed *aman*, an amnesty, to all who should deliver themselves up by entering a certain enclosure. When he had thus entrapped the population he chose out the chiefs and had them all decapitated. "A good killing," said my informant, as he expressively passed his right hand over his left fist, "a right good killing! and since then the country rests in the peace of God." It was the doctor, an old pupil of Clot Bey, who told the story. He had come from Kassala to attend the only survivor from the massacre.

the Sheich El Amin, the faithful, a name of honour, but whether given for his fidelity to Mehemet Ali, or for some act of treachery to his country, I could not learn. He had dislocated and broken his collar-bone a few days before by a fall from a camel's back, and the doctor had been sent to cure him, a mark of regard on the part of the governor, which proved how valuable and influential a person he must be. No doubt the attention was the more eager, that Mousa, the great sheich of all the Arabs in this line of country is "out," and though repeatedly offered the *aman*, refuses to trust to it without the guarantee of some European. The doctor told me that bad fevers are common here, but that there is no disease peculiar to the country, though he has seen many cases of elephantiasis, and he mentioned a disease of a very virulent nature, as far as I could learn from his confused description, a sort of leprosy, which is common at Gadarif.

The country round Elmit Kenab, is covered with large 'osher trees, which are here made no use of. In the Hedjaz the acrid milky juice of the tree is applied as caustic to saddle-galls of the camels, and its wood yields a charcoal for making gunpowder. It promises, however, to become an important article of commerce, if a remark which I made upon the silky down of its seed-pod, and which had already

attracted the attention of Mr. Kotzika of Kassalah, prove founded. In going through the low wood my camel repeatedly started, and at last as I was proceeding at a pretty sharp trot, it all of a sudden wheeled round about, and went off at a full gallop, leaving me with the carpet which was spread over my pack-saddle, sprawling in the dust. This time the thick woollen *shefta* saved my head, and the carpet which was still beneath me broke the fall, so that I got off with only a few bruises painful at the moment, but which I soon assured myself would not require the aid of Sheich Amin's doctor. As I am now getting used to such accidents, I was more angry than either frightened or hurt, and still sitting on my carpet in the middle of the path, I abused in my choicest Arabic the owner of the dromedary, who had not warned me that it was a dangerous beast to ride without a nose-rope, a small rope passed through a hole in one nostril, which is an effectual method of holding in a vicious camel. It seems that ever since we saw or heard the hyæna, it has exhibited symptoms of fear, fancying that its enemy was lurking behind every bush, and from what I was afterwards told of the number in this place, it is not impossible that its eyes quicker than mine may have discovered one.

The mid-day halt near the last group of wells we

were to find in our road was the prettiest scene I have come upon in Soudan. The ground was green with a short thick grass, studded with groups of trees of many kinds, not a few covered with flowering creepers, among which was a beautiful, but sickly smelling *tropæolum*; in all of them nestled thousands of birds, some large, some small, but all of the gayest plumage. There were great flocks of a small Isabella-coloured dove, with a jet-black ring round the neck; they fluttered from tree to tree as the little boys in attendance on the cattle pursued them with stones, but seemed to have little fear, for their flight, though often renewed, was never a long one. I could not allow the servant to fire at them, they were so pretty, and our larder was well stocked, as we had passed several herds of gazelles which afforded us some excellent cutlets, and wild guinea-fowl in such numbers, that shooting them was mere butchery. These last were nearly as delicate and fully as well-flavoured as the pheasant. Leaving the wells we rode for some time through fields of durrah, the most splendid of the cereals, looking like the corn-fields which Gulliver describes in Brobdingnag-land. It grows from twelve to fifteen feet high, bearing its pine-shaped head of grain on a curved stalk springing from the stem, like the grape-ornament in Byzantine decorations. This magnifi-



cent plant which is successfully cultivated as far north as Girgeh, is sown in the lands watered by the inundation, and its seed is ripe at the end of ninety days. The grain, though generally much cheaper than, sometimes reaches the same price as wheat; but it is still preferred to wheat by the people of Soudan, as they consider that it is one-third more nutritious. It seems not improbable that this may be the grain spoken of in the Gospel, as the mustard-seed which is "less than all seed that be in the earth; but when it is sown groweth up and becometh greater than all herbs and shooteth out great branches."

Towards evening we emerged from the fertile country and came into a large gravel plain, on which we saw numerous herds of antelopes, and immense coveys of guinea-fowl, many hundred at a time running rapidly and in long line over the ground, and at last rising with a heavy flight when pursued. We had only made seven hours, though it was sunset when we encamped, having stopped long at the beautiful well I have mentioned, and our camel-drivers would willingly have continued for some time longer as they expressed great fears of robbers. Their objections to stopping we of course over-ruled; they were suggested probably by the barrenness of soil, which offered no herbage for the camels, rather

than from any risk of robbery, as a European at least may travel in any part of this country without the smallest fear. Two French travellers were, it is true, plundered in a country further to the west two years ago; but they demanded and obtained from the Pasha an indemnity of seventeen thousand dollars, which was levied on the tribe that had attacked them,—a lesson which will not soon be forgotten. This is the only way of meeting such outrages; a punishment affecting the pocket is long remembered, and as the whole tribe pays, each individual is in future interested in protecting the traveller. We were, of course, not disturbed, and starting rather early, set off without guide for the capital of the province, directed to it by the hill of Kassalah, which was in view a-head of us. It took us more than five hours, and the caravan nearly eight to reach it,—a long tantalising ride on weary beasts under a burning sun. In starting we imagined ourselves at less than two hours of our destination, but the further we rode the more distant it seemed to become. The well-marked road at length branched into several, all in appearance very much alike; at one time in a thick wood we completely lost sight of the hill, and meeting no person to direct us, chose our path much at random. Our camels exhausted with the heat could hardly be made to move at the

slowest pace, only quickening their step to rush beneath every tree which offered a shade, then settling down under it, regardless of blows, so that more than once I thought we must await the caravan. The hill was indeed, once more in sight, but there was nothing which indicated the approach to a town; it might still be very distant, and we were on the point of giving in, when a man with a donkey came by and he luckily knowing a few words of Arabic, was able to tell us that the town was close at hand. We were then in a pretty grove of tamarisks, on many of which hung festoons of a bright green parasite with scarlet flowers, like those of the trumpet honeysuckle. Ten minutes more brought us to the first gardens, then through a group of straw huts we reached a welcome well, of whose water we drank, and now riding along the mud-walls of the town, we entered its gates, and were directed to the house of Mr. Janni Kotzika, on whose hospitality we depended for obtaining a lodging.

## CHAPTER XI.

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Kassalah—Slavery Abominations—Turkish Tyranny—Chosrew Bey  
—Camel Hiring—Market of Kassalah—Its Climate—An Old  
Eastern Merchant.

*March 28.*—Kassalah (كَسَالَة), the name of the bare seven-peaked hill of granite which we had had so long before our eyes, is the name now given in official acts to the town built at about two hours from its base, on the northern side. It was formerly called Hhawatty (حَوَّطِي), and twelve years ago it consisted only of the straw huts we had passed through on arriving, whose inhabitants are Hhalangah Arabs (الْحَلانِقَة), the former masters of the country. Since the Egyptian Conquest it has become the chief place of a province extending to Sawakin on the East, to the frontiers of Abyssinia on the south, to the Atbara on the West, while an uncertain limit of mountainous desert bounds it towards Berber. It is a more recent acquisition than Sennar; and when he first took possession of the country, the Egyptian Pasha contented himself with a nominal tribute, leaving the Meleks, such

sub-kings as old Ottoman pride used to consider the krals, or kings of Europe, in possession of their hereditary authority. At first, therefore, these Meleks were only called upon to change one feudal suzerain for another; the Pasha of Egypt, in the name of the Sultan of Constantinople, succeeded to the Sultan of Dar Fungi, whose nominal authority extended over Sennar, and even as far as Berber. By degrees this limited authority was extended, as pretexts for humbling the more powerful chiefs, or opportunities of conciliating the lesser ones presented themselves, and at the present day the Meleks are reduced to utter insignificance; taxes are now levied, and the country is governed very much like any other Egyptian province. A mudir, or prefect, resident at Kassalah governs the whole province, having Turkish Kashefs, generally commanders of forty irregulars, stationed at different points.

The Hhalangahs have a head sheich, son of their last Melek, under whom there are several inferior sheichs. They are responsible to Government for the capitation tax, or *tolba*, raised in their tribe, amounting, according to official accounts, to four hundred purses a-year; of this they receive, for the trouble of collection, five per cent., one half of which goes to the head sheich, and the remainder is divided among the others. The *tolba* is paid by all

males above the age of fourteen, and its amount varies from two to a hundred dollars, or even more, according to what are considered each man's means; it is therefore pretty evident that the sum I have just stated as the revenue derived from this tax is very much below the truth. The servants of the house in which we were lodged gain two hundred and fifty-six piastres a-year in wages, of which they each pay seventy as tolba. Whatever may be its real amount, the whole of this revenue, as well as that derived from the customs, is expended in the province, being chiefly spent in buying and equipping the four negro regiments which are maintained in it. These soldiers are all Soudan slaves, bought or carried off by the Government from the mountains of Fazogli for this purpose. Their keep costs very little, food being incredibly cheap. Durrah costs eight or nine piastres the ardeb; the oke of beef ( $2\frac{1}{2}$  lbs. English), costs three halfpence; their cotton clothes, made of the low priced but stout native manufacture of Sennar, form a very trifling item of expenditure; and their pay (they nominally receive pay), is ten piastres a-month. There are at present three of these slave regiments in Kassalah, each containing eight hundred men, a fourth being absent on some expedition. There are also a hundred Turkish irregulars, and one hundred and twenty-

five of the Dongolese horsemen, called Sheikiah. These last are splendid fellows, but even more indomitably savage than the Arnacouts. They are employed by the Government, in conjunction with the border Arabs, in the iniquitous raids into Abyssinia, which furnish a considerable part of the revenues of the province. This year, in the latter end of January, they made a successful incursion into the territory of the Bogos, carrying away three hundred and forty individuals, men, women, and children, all Christians, and eighteen hundred beeves. Of these one-half fell to the share of the Arabs, the other half was carried to the account of the Government, which sold a part by auction, and distributed the others, on account of their arrears of pay, to the officers and other employés. This is the usual way in which the produce of these manstealing, freebooting expeditions is turned to account; the slaves and the cattle are ranged in categories, according to their estimated values, and then distributed instead of pay to the employés, and even to the troops. An Italian missionary, named Giovanni Stella, from whose congregation sixteen of these poor wretches had been carried off, followed them here in hopes of rescuing them. The Governor only laughed at his demand when he claimed the liberation of the three hundred and forty freeborn Abyssinians who had

thus been carried into slavery, and when he afterwards limited himself to requiring those who belonged to his own flock, offering even to pay the price at which they were valued, it was equally in vain. I myself, while in Kassalah, saw several of the victims of this most recent outrage, one of them an old woman, whom the *wakil* of Mr. Kotzika had redeemed for ten dollars, meaning to send her back to her country; another of these, a poor little boy certainly not above five years old, had been made pipe-bearer to the Egyptian Kateb, or writer to the troops.\*

I can find no words to express the feelings of indignation which the recital of these atrocities filled me with; had its victims been Pagans, the crime was atrocious, but they were Christians, and therefore more entitled to secure our sympathies. After our departure from Kassalah the English Consul at Messawa came here to investigate the matter, and though his representations to the Governor were met with insult, as well as refusal, I have still some

\* Along the frontier from the Red Sea to the Atbara are several tribes, some of them dependant on the Egyptian government, others paying tribute both to Egypt and Abyssinia. These, in order from the East, are the Beni 'Amer, El Báriah, El Máriah, and El Bazah. The last are said by the people here to be idolaters,—a vague designation in a country where the Kostani Christians, the chief victims of the predatory incursions on the borders, are always ranked as *Majus* or Magians.



faint hope that justice may be obtained ; but this country is too remote from European eyes to make me sanguine that any real satisfaction will be given, however fair the promises, with which the Pasha may seek to gain time or delude the European authorities in Cairo. The Egyptian Government has long had designs upon Abyssinia, as I have already mentioned in referring to Abbas Pasha's intrigues to obtain the government of the Hedjaz. Notwithstanding the stipulations made three years ago by the European powers, to prevent aggression on the Abyssinian frontiers, there is every reason to believe that the Pasha, whose obstinacy of purpose is only equalled by the cunning with which he has circumvented more than one Frank diplomatist, has by no means changed his views. It is not by predatory incursions only that he seeks to gain a footing in Abyssinia ; he has recourse to a kind of wiles, which promise him a gradual, but not less certain, success in his projects, and having hit upon this plan he will be able to defy the opposition, and to answer the remonstrances of Europe. A month before our arrival in Kassalah, some Egyptian emissaries had inveigled several of the chiefs of Christian border tribes which had hitherto been tributary to Abyssinia, into making their submission to the mudir of this province, by bestowing on them dresses of honour, with the pro-

mise that for a number of years their tribute should be only nominal. Having obtained their seals to an instrument setting forth their submission, he dismissed them to return home, accompanied by Musulman missionaries, charged to receive the profession of faith of such members of their tribes as chose to become Mahommedans !

For a day or two after our arrival, I was in hopes that I should witness the well-merited punishment of all these outrages, as we were detained here some days longer than we wished by the rumours of a threatened attack by the Abyssinians. News were brought that two sons of Ubié, the well-known chief of Godjam, were already at a place only two days distant. They, probably, however, had no suspicion how easily they might have taken Kassalah, and contented themselves with reprisals upon the camels and cattle of the Egyptian borders. The mud walls would have offered little resistance, and the garrison, who detest the life to which they have been sold, would at their first appearance have seized the opportunity of recovering their liberty by deserting, without firing a shot. The discontent of these slave defenders of despotism affords a curious proof of how easy a task it is to keep the ignorant in subjection ; so in the dark night a handful of determined robbers may attack and pillage the most numerous caravan.

A few Turkish officers commanding slaves, who loathe their bonds, exercise a despotic sway over the numerous nomad tribes, and the populous villages with which this country is filled; and stranger still, it is not yet thirty years since the first cautious steps were taken for the subjection of a country which had defied alike the arms and the civilisation of the Pharaohs, the Ptolemies, and the Cæsars. Had Mehemet Ali lived, or had his policy survived him, it is not improbable that the frauds and the violence by which the conquest was secured would have been amply compensated by a mild rule, and the introduction of those useful arts which are the first steps in civilisation, and this may still be reserved for the future; but at present the old barbarism exists in all its primitive ignorance, only the hospitable virtues which modified it are lost, and a grinding fiscality contributes its quota to complete the wretchedness of the population. To appreciate the Egyptian Government, which has in the last few years found so many defenders in England, it is necessary to go into the provinces. In Alexandria and Cairo, cities with an admirable police, where one may walk out alone, and into every quarter at any hour of the night, far more safely than in London or Paris, one would think oneself—looking only to the surface, and carefully closing one's ears—in the best governed

country in the world ; but in the provinces, nay, at the very gates of Cairo, this paternal government wears a harsher aspect, and the further one goes into places where the fear of European criticism is lessened, the more revolting become its characteristics. One soon learns that Egypt is only a great farm, whose proprietor squeezes all he can from his middlemen, while they drain the very heart-blood of the people.

We have here an admirable specimen of the worst old school in the Mudir Chosrew Bey, a Circassian slave of Ibrahim Pasha, a man of no small cunning, coarse manners and appearance, and a fanatical hater of Christians. If, as I am told, he has a sort of love of justice, it is exerted in acts of the greatest barbarity, and it seems that whatever checks may exist elsewhere on the despotism of the governor, none are in operation in these remote regions. When he can catch a robber—he has thus treated three or four in the last two years—he has him blown from a cannon's mouth ; a practice to which we perhaps owe the perfect security of the roads, however revolting its ferocity. The unfortunate Copts, who fill the offices of clerks in the government bureaux, not only hear themselves daily reviled in such terms as " Christian Dog," and " Unbelieving Swine," but they are often on the order of their tyrant, for a mere word or on a suspicion, laid down and basti-

nadoed.\* We had personally no reason to be satisfied with him; I suppose "his wicked conscience smited him," and he suspected, travellers being rare in these regions, that we had come to inquire about the Abyssinian affair. My companion had brought strong letters of recommendation from Emin Bey, the Viceroy's agent in Jidda, to which he did honour by showing no other attentions than procuring us camels to Gadārif, at exactly three times the price the government pays for them, and twice and a half more than the merchants here have to give. Knowing the proper price, we refused to submit to the imposition, for which I heard that he abused us roundly in his divan, saying that two English travellers who passed through Kassalah two months ago had paid that price, and he would make us do so also. It was, after all, no large sum to make a difficulty about, but on principle we were determined to resist

\* A few days after we left Kassalah, H.M. Consul at Messawa arrived to inquire into and report upon the recent outrages on the frontier. He met with even a colder reception than ourselves; the mudir forbade the Arabs to carry letters for him, forbade the public writers to write for him; in fact, completely excommunicated him, a penalty in which our worthy host, Mr. Kotzika, was also involved. It was necessary to go a journey of two days to reach a tribe not dependant on the mudir, in order to forward his correspondence. The usual system of promises and evasion was, of course, resorted to in Cairo, to excuse the culprit, who no doubt had only acted on Abbas Pasha's instructions, and it was only after that monster's death, that H.M. Consul-General obtained from the present Viceroy satisfaction, by Choarew Bey's dismissal.—Cairo, August 5th. 1854.

an evident imposition, and notwithstanding all the obstacles he threw in our way underhand, we succeeded with a little patience in obtaining camels at the price we had originally offered, a slight advance on that usually paid. Our predecessors had been unlucky enough to come here when our host, the only European merchant established in Kassalah, was absent, and knowing nothing of Arabic, they were entirely at the mercy of their dragoman and the mudir. Camels are wonderfully cheap in this country, being worth from five to sixteen dollars, the latter the price of the best dromedary, and their hire is proportionally low; to one who is ignorant of these facts even triple price seems very cheap. As these gentlemen were provided with a special recommendation from the Egyptian government, entitling them to be furnished with everything at government prices, to which they would naturally add as backshish a trifle to equal or exceed that paid by natives, when they learned the imposition which had been practised upon them, they would not be particularly grateful to Chosrew Bey.

Kassalah, though only a small town inclosed by mud walls, contains a castle with a very large powder magazine, and barracks capable of containing at least 4,000 soldiers. It is built on a gently rising ground; behind it the hill from which it takes its

name, presents a curious group of bare rounded granite peaks. To the East is seen the Gebel Mokran (مكران). Between these runs the Gash, which is believed to have its rise in Hamsain, a province of Abyssinia near a town whose name is written Dobreg (دبرق), but pronounced by the natives Doborwe; its course is a very winding one, running first south, then turning west, and at last north; in our maps it is called the Mareb. At this season its bed at Kassalah is dry, the scanty waters which its perennial fountain supplies being dissipated before they reach the plain; but when the rainy season arrives, it rolls a large body of water in its wide bed to swell the Atbara. Excellent water is found everywhere at a short distance from the surface, both here and in the plains below, from which it may be inferred, that there runs under the whole soil a vast sheet of water, not improbably derived from the same source as the Gash. There are few fruits which the fertile neighbourhood does not produce, though all are of recent importation. Grapes and figs are eaten during the whole year, a succession of crops being procured by pruning, and at certain times cutting off the supply of water. Earthquakes are sometimes felt, but the straw huts and low mud houses are not exposed to much injury from this cause, and probably the nature of the

soil contributes to render their effects innocuous. Industry might make this an earthly paradise, but alas! in these climates the teeming fertility which gladdens the eye and swells the breast, is always accompanied by an evil genius. When the summer rains have ceased, and the trees put forth their bright foliage, and the ground is covered with verdure and enamelled with flowers, fevers spring up with them, and few in the entire population of town and country escape their attacks. These fevers are sometimes at once fatal, and often retain a lingering hold on the frame which undermines the constitution. I had occasion to see many such sufferers, for the last summer was a peculiarly unhealthy one.

Kassalah, though so recently built, is already a market of considerable importance, and its vicinity to the chief marts in Sennar and Abyssinia must render it, at no distant period, one of the best trading stations in the Soudan. Our host, who came here only two years ago, is as yet the only European merchant in the place, but the advantages it offers will probably soon attract others; and Mr. Kotzika says, that there is an ample field for the enterprise of three or four mercantile establishments. Elephants' teeth of the best quality, hides, tallow, and ostrich feathers, are the produce of the neighbourhood;



gums, wax, and coffee of good quality, are imported from Abyssinia. Europe furnishes in exchange plain and printed cottons, Venetian glass beads, and a small quantity of iron. The great gum market of Gadārif is only four days journey from here; thence eight days are sufficient to reach Matāmah, the principal mart for exchanges betwixt Abyssinia and Sennar, and much resorted to by traders from Dar Fungi and Fazogli. From Matāmah there are two roads to Gondar; that usually followed is both steep and in bad condition, but the other, which is closed to all but native Christians, is described as being half a day shorter and much better. Mr. Kotzika with great difficulty obtained permission to return by it from an excursion into Abyssinia made this winter. It took him four days and a half in all, his first stage being from Gondar to Jendi, where are the tombs of the kings and archbishops, four hours; thence to Chaukar, where the best coffee, generally sold as that of Mocha, is grown, four hours; thence to the limits of the province of Takussa, one day; and two and a half more to Matāmah.

I was unable to obtain any trustworthy information regarding the revenues of the province. The *tolba*, with the many extra contributions which the government raises in kind, forms the most important branch of income, but I could arrive at nothing

like an approximation to its amount. The customs furnish a very small sum annually. They were formerly farmed for one hundred thousand piastres, about £1000, but the Divan has lately taken them into its own hands, and they do not probably, under the new management, yield a greater net income than on the old system. There are six custom-houses in the province, at Guz Rejeb, Menâ, Sedarât, El Gadin, Mit Kenab, and Kassalah. I was told by a person who had made an offer for the contract last year, that Kassalah alone gives more than £1000, and that paying four times that sum, there would still be a very considerable profit if the service were properly organised.

The hottest months in this country are March and April: the first days after our arrival the heat was so intense (the thermometer at two o'clock being generally 103°, and at night seldom falling below 94°) that it was not only impossible to go out, but even difficult to sleep. The difficulty was not alleviated by the attacks of a fly so minute, as to be almost invisible, which the Arabs appropriately call *yakol-yeskot*, indicating its voracity and silence, as unlike the mosquito, it neither tantalises nor warns its victim with its music. At last one evening as we were sitting in the court-yard, a few large drops of seething rain fell, and though the hot shower did

not last ten minutes, its effect on the temperature during the remaining days we were here was very grateful. After this a cool wind at mid-day tempered the heat, and the night seemed almost cold, but I was warned that such early showers, for the rains will not begin for another month, are often productive of disease, however grateful they may seem.

The forced repose to which we were reduced added to the heavy hot atmosphere, was of course irksome enough, and the day passed with sluggish pace while we were waiting for the camels which we had sent for from a tribe beyond the Atbara. Our loneliness was relieved by occasional visits from some of the inhabitants, and the even course of our monotonous life was interrupted by a monster dinner which the head clerk of the divan, a Copt, insisted upon giving us. He prepared us for the exertion we were condemned to, by a long prefatory course of nuts, olives and salad, washed down with large quantities of honey araki made in his own house, and almost as good as the best Scio mastic.

Among our daily visitors was one who was a good specimen of the old eastern merchant—Hassan of Assuan, a descendant of one of the Turks left there by Sultan Selim, a man who may be almost any age from forty to sixty. His beard and eyebrows

are still a jet black, but his face is wrinkled, and the absence of a good many teeth gives him a mumbling sort of pronounciation which must be very useful in negotiations where he wishes to avoid committing himself. Such a trade as he carries on is a real diplomacy. He passes generally six or seven months of the year here, purchasing gold, ivory, gum and coffee, while he sells lentils, rice, cottons. When he has disposed of one cargo and acquired a fresh one, he hires camels to Berber and Korosko, whence he descends the Nile to Assuan, returning after a few months' absence. If, however, he hears that any article, for he is, Jew-like, general trader, is cheaper than usual in any part of Soudan, he sets off at once for that place. His whole establishment consists of himself and a slave, and the preparations for moving are quickly enough made. He has thus visited Sennar and the mountains of Fazogli, Chartum and El Obeid, besides he knows every inch of the province of Tacca. Every year, towards Rhamadan, if possible, he returns to his family, spending a month or two with them, and then confiding them for the remaining months to God's care, he resumes his journeyings, never hearing news of his home in the interval, unless by chance he should stumble upon some merchant coming from Assuan. He told me of the ruins of an old town which he thinks have

never been visited by a Frank, two days' journey to the west of the Atbara, built, according to his account, of immense red bricks, but without columns or sculpture. Of the ruins lying a day's journey from this or from Mit Kenab toward the mountains, of which an Arab sheich told Prince Puckler Muskau, no one here had ever heard.



## CHAPTER XII.

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Termites—Shukrieh Chieftain—Torture *v.* Homœopathy—Old Armour—The Atbara—Tamarind Tree—A Slave Caravan—England should speak—A dose of rancid Butter—A rich Country.

*April 7th.*—We were indebted to Mr. Kotzika for at length obtaining us camels at the legitimate price; and this afternoon, accompanied by his clerk, a Christian from Jerusalem, a lively old man of wonderful activity for his years, we were able to resume our journey. Immediately beyond the town to the westward we crossed the broad bed of the Gash (قاش), in which a small village of Arab huts had been erected. In about six weeks a rapid stream will roll down it, overflowing a considerable space on either bank, which, when the waters fall, is sown by the people of Kassalah with durrah and water melons, the first comer taking possession of the ground. On the other side of the water-course we entered a thick wood of thorns, through which the path wound in circuitous turnings, and often

so narrow that it required no small vigilance to guard the head and eyes from the long sharp thorns which menaced them on every side; the camels gave good proof of the toughness of their hides by the unconcerned way in which they pushed through them. Good Mallem Girgis was mounted on his white donkey, and thus had to contend with the lower bushes as well as the trees, and in less than an hour his gay silver-grey suit was torn into shreds, a misfortune which he took very good-naturedly. Passing out of these thickets we entered an open country dotted over with two kinds of low thorny shrubs, the one a dwarf mimosa with a rough brown stem, *El kitr* (الكتر), the other growing rather taller, *El a'ut* (الأعوت), with a smooth bright green bark. As we had a bright moon we continued till 11 o'clock, making six hours' march, and slept among the tall withered grass of the plain. The hill of Kassalah was N. 57' E., and from east to south-east were seen three of the hills of Abyssinia, Abu Gamel (أبو قمل), Tareifat (طريفات), and Gulsa (جلسة), behind which last lies Rabtah, the first important place in Abyssinia. From our night station it took upwards of ten hours to reach the banks of the Atbara, passing over an immense level plain covered in many places with low wood, but presenting no remarkable feature till about two hours from

the river. Here we traversed a large tract covered with fallen trees, some nearly perfect, others half rotted away. It seemed as if by enchantment the force which had held the members of each tree united to the stem, had been dissolved; the trunk itself lay splintered round its roots, and each branch occupied the place which its shadow must have covered before it fell. This singular scene of devastation (for miles not a tree had escaped the common fate), is the work of the inhabitants of the mounds, some more than eight feet high, which rise like ruined cottages in every direction. The people of the country call them the worm, I suppose them to be white ants, but all the hills I approached seemed deserted—there were at least no creeping things to be seen round them—and I confess I had not the courage to push my investigations so far as to attack the structures themselves. Near the river the country hitherto flat, becomes wavy, the rises and falls on its surface being short and in rapid succession. Several fields planted with cotton, showed that the Shukrieh Arabs, the inhabitants of this country, do not neglect agriculture. The cotton which they grow is of a fair average quality, equal to the better sort of Egyptian, and brings a good price in the Abyssinian markets, for which the greater part is destined. The women of the tribe weave it into



stripes of a coarse yellowish cloth, which forms the only article of their dress as well as of the men. The dark green line which marks the course of the river had been for some time in sight, when turning to the left we entered a winding valley containing a good many trees, its bare sides literally covered with camels and cattle. This is the Wady Sha'latib, (عَلَاتِيب), commonly called the Wady Hammed, the name of the sheich of the powerful branch of the Shukrieh tribe which inhabits it. It was watering-day for the camels, which pasture on the long dry grass of the plains above, and are only brought to drink once in four or five days. It is a curious sight to see them in long strings descending the slopes to the river to drink; they enter far into the bed of the shallow stream, where they remain long, alternately drinking and gazing about them with that anxious look which gives the camel an air of intelligent suffering, notwithstanding its long pouting lips, while the fish, with which the river abounds, enjoy a rich treat in catching the insects which infest their bellies. Half-way down the valley we reached the village composed of scattered mat-tents, most of them with an enclosure of dry branches. Three or four large trees shaded the market-place; beneath one of them was a stand on which meat was exposed for sale, and a couple of carcasses

of sheep were suspended from its branches. Two or three sheds were occupied as smithies, the only branch of industry exercised among the Shukrieh, except weaving, at which I saw several men employed, seated at low frames in the door-way of their tents. Passing the village, we went down to the water's edge to encamp, partly to avoid the dirt mounds which usually are collected on the outskirts of the habitations, partly to enjoy the sight of the running stream. The sheich was ill, and could not therefore come to pay his respects, but he did not fail to send the lamb and milk, the regular tribute of Arab hospitality, and I therefore, perhaps by way of something to do, perhaps from a vague idea of humanity, put my homœopathic medicine box into my pocket, and proceeded to visit and prescribe for him.

His tent differed in no respect from the others in the encampment; it was formed of mats in the usual form of the Bedawy tent, and so low that it was barely possible to stand upright in the centre; a few carpets suspended from the roof served as a further protection against the heat, and the ill-closed sides afforded a constant current of air. There was a raised stage occupying about one-third of the tent partially screened by a curtain, which I conjectured to be occupied by a detachment of the ladies of the establishment from the noises which proceeded from

behind the separation. At one end of this was a rude frame-work of branches, from which hung water-skins, gourds, and other articles of household furniture. The tent contained a single '*angabib*, the excellent bedstead of the country, a four-footed frame over which is stretched a net-work of strips of untanned hide, serving as a seat for a guest, while the host himself and the members of his clan, the friends who had assembled to comfort him, sat on mats or on the bare sand. A young and very tame gazelle was tied at the entrance, and several young ostriches, the quaintest little creatures imaginable, covered with a sort of coarse hair, trotted fearlessly about the tent. The sheich, a muscular young man, wore nothing but the cotton plaid and a number of amulets, in no way distinguishable from his subjects. One of his visitors wore his hair curiously dressed in seven plaits clinging closely to the head from the forehead to the nape of the neck. Coffee and pipes are alike unknown in an Arab establishment; the cup of welcome was here a large calabash filled with honey and water, a pleasant enough but very thirst-exciting beverage. I found my host suffering from fever and inflammation of the chest; he had had recourse to the usual Arab remedies, cupping and cauterisation, but was no better after fourteen days' of suffering. On his promising not to repeat the

bleeding, I gave him with all due solemnity a dose of aconite, which procured him a good night, the first sleep he had enjoyed since the beginning of his illness. As we were not to start till late, I returned to see him the next day, and found that a doctor or wise-man of the tribe, had taken advantage of the favourable symptoms to appropriate the credit of the cure. He had performed on him early in the morning an operation, which as I was not myself the sufferer, nor wished to have the indigenous faculty against me, I did not object to. It consisted in pinching the patient's right arm till it was literally spotted all over with marks of a finger and thumb, an ingenious way of driving out the Evil Spirit which caused the pain in the side. As I found him much better, I talked to him about his arms, and asked to see a sword which I had heard spoken of as worth one hundred-and-fifty or two hundred dollars. Two large-eyed cherub-faced urchins, naked as when born, excepting large bunches of amulets hung round their necks, who had been playing at bo-peep from behind the curtain, dragged forward the long, straight, cross-handled sword. Their father drew it from its scabbard, and exhibited with evident pride the blade, apparently of old Spanish make, now damasked with rust-marks, and in European estimation, nearly worthless, though it may once have been a fine

weapon. No maker's name was visible, but it bore a mark, a Latin cross rising from a longitudinally bisected circle. After I had admired the sword more than my conscience would warrant, he offered to show me his armour, when a leathern bag containing the helmet *El khudah* (الخوذة) was handed from behind the curtain. It was composed of a circular bowl of steel, *El tasah* (الطاسة), ornamented with a large brass plate and boss in the centre, and four smaller bosses round it, while a bent bar of steel, descending from the centre, is intended to protect the nose. This and the bowl were beautifully inscribed with verses of the Koran, engraved in the character used about three hundred years ago, somewhat thicker in proportion to the length than those which we admire on the Syrian brass-work ascribed to Malek Ed-Daher. A net-work of steel rings was fastened to the back and sides of the bowl, and both were lined with a thick cotton quilting. After this had been replaced in its skin, another bag was handed out from the same mysterious repository, containing the *Dera'ah* (الدراع), or shirt of mail, a narrow shirt with arms, completely covering the whole body, the protection of the legs being provided for by a split up the middle of the mail, so that with strings fastening on the inner sides they are encased as if in trousers. He told me that his

horse when he goes to war, is also clothed in a complete suit of cotton-quilting, but without the chain-mail. The costume, even to the cross-handled sword, is, I believe, exactly that worn by our barons in the early Crusades ; all the sheichs and their sons here have such suits, and he mentioned one who has fourteen. They are in general old family pieces, but when a fresh supply is wanted, they obtain them from Mecca, where they are easily got, as the Arabs of the Hedjaz no longer wear armour. When at Tayf, I was told that the last Sherif had a guard of thirty men equipped in this kind of armour, like the Papal Swiss for show rather than use, and I was promised by His Highness's treasurer a helmet of ancient workmanship, which has not however yet reached me.

The Atbara, though even at this season a broad stream, does not now occupy a fourth of the wide deep channel which its waters fill at the time of the high Nile. In fording it here, the water hardly reached above the camel's knees. The bed is pebbly and the stream beautifully clear. Two hours from this, we again forded the river at a place rejoicing in the odd name of Shingl-Bingl. Near the water's edge were a great number of mud-built troughs for watering the cattle, seemingly an odd care in such a place, but of which the explanation was simple

enough. The Arabs in this country mix salt with the water drunk by the female camels, believing that it increases the quantity of their milk and improves its flavour. The immense troops of camels which one sees are almost entirely females; they are carefully tended, and never employed in carrying burdens nor even ridden, their entire value consisting in their foals. Of these, the males are sold, and the females swell the number of the troop. A thousand camels and twice as many head of cattle, is no uncommon fortune in these countries, and the greater sheichs have besides great numbers of slaves. Sheich Hammed, whom I visited in his wretched tent, besides two wives, one of them a daughter of the great sheich Abu Sin, has one hundred and fifty female slaves, and as many males. A celebrated lady, daughter of the last vizir of Sennar, who died two or three years ago at her residence near Abu Harras, gave as a wedding gift to her daughter, four hundred male, and the same number of female slaves. Slaves, cattle, and ounce-rings of gold, form the possessions of the wealthy in this country; money if not unknown is comparatively rare, and of the wants which money will satisfy, they may be said to have none.

Two hours from Shingl-Bingl, crossing an arm of the river, we entered an island which it forms here,

*Jesiret el Habsat* (هابسات), whose rich alluvial soil, capable of producing an endless succession of crops, is totally uncultivated. The strong tall grass which covers it after the rain, was now standing yellow and dry, the flower-stems reaching six and seven feet in height. The straw, it cannot be called hay, is as thick as that of our largest wheat, differing from it in having the interior filled up with a white pith. The seeds which I gathered when rubbed in the hand emit a strong resinous smell, and when the wind blows over a large tract of this dry grass, it becomes charged with a spicy scent. Forging the Atbara on the other side, we continued for an hour further to Dakakin, an Arab village inhabited by the Nawēmah (نويمه). Having to change some of our camels here, we were detained all day, stretched on the river side in the hot shade of our tents, which had not been calculated for the tropical climate we were now in. To make a start and get our new camel-men away from their homes, we went on for an hour-and-a-half, after the moon had risen passing over an extensive down. At this season the night would be the best time for travelling over an uninteresting country, and the Arabs never think of exposing themselves or their camels to the mid-day sun ; but to do this with comfort one should be provided with double tents, for one suffers much more from the heat when



in repose than when riding, and however painful the glare of the sun, I found in a country such as this, presenting an immense tract sparingly dotted with trees, that the moonlight strains the eyes, and fatigues them much more than the sunlight.

The next day, three hours after starting, we again came to the Atbara, this time without crossing it. Its channel is here very beautiful, being interrupted by a number of rocks and sand-banks, which occasion a pleasant murmur in its water, and the bright green rushes with which many of them are overgrown refresh the eye. Whilst the water-barrels were being filled I made my way to one of them, and lay down among the rushes, their long stalks making a soft and elastic couch, whose coolness compensated for the want of shade. I was in hopes of seeing some of the crocodiles which frequent these banks to sun themselves at mid-day, but the only indication of their vicinity was the twittering of a couple of those pretty grey and white little birds which are said to serve them as toothpicks. Good Master Girgis, whose good-humour was unfailing, though he was evidently suffering from fatigue as well as from two falls he had had from his donkey, clambered down the steep bank to join me, where I lay basking in the sun. His thin shrivelled face and grey beard make him look perhaps an older man than he really is, and

I often joked him on his being the youngest, or at least the most youthful of the party. To-day his stick did him good service, for though still indefatigable, his aching bones seemed to render unaided movement impossible, and he volunteered to tell us that he was too old to go without a stick. "When a good man reaches his fortieth year, he takes a stick in his hand; he who despises this precaution offends his Lord by over-weening self-confidence." The rest of this day we continued over a flat uninteresting country, which offered little variety, till we again crossed the Atbara and entered a great plain called Hassab Allah, after a Santon whose tomb is seen on the left. Two or three novelties in the vegetable world furnished a line or two to my note-book. A Tamarind tree grew near the place where we crossed; it looked, after the stunted vegetation to which I have lately been accustomed, like one of the most magnificent of forest trees, but I was told that this was a small specimen of its kind, though it was equal in size, as in general form it bore a considerable resemblance, to a very fine chesnut. On the road to Sumar there is said to be a Tamarind, beneath whose shade 200 men can camp. A considerable extent of this plain is covered with a low thorny shrub, on which grow hard balls of the size and shape of a medlar. Each is armed with two long thorns,

between which is a small hole, from which when the wind blows a whistling sound issues; hence its name the *Safeir* (صَفِير) or whistle. With another tree with round glossy leaves, the *Heikabit* (هَيْكَبِيت), we made an unfortunate acquaintance. It is said to be fatal to camels who are fed upon durrâh, though innoxious to those which are turned out to pasture. A dromedary belonging to Mr. Kotzika, who had sent one of his servants with us, eat a few mouthfuls of its leaves before it was observed, and five days afterwards died, some of the Arabs said of its effects, though others affirmed that it had been struck by a falling star, a common accident both to man and beast, according to the superstition of the country.

We saw here many traces of elephants which come down the road we had ascended from the river to drink; their footprints were still fresh, and the broken and peeled branches were among the evidences which showed that they had fed here also. As we rode across the plain we saw at a distance a *marafil*, feeding in the long grass. Our people gave it chase but it soon outstripped them, and with lumbering speed made off into the low underwood, where pursuit was vain. It is said to be a very large species of hyæna, with hind legs considerably lower than the fore legs, but I was never able to

obtain a nearer view of one, and the word does not occur in the dictionary.

Encamped in this plain we saw next morning one of those revolting sights which render slavery so odious. A caravan of slave-merchants passed us, bringing slaves from the South. The victims were young boys and men of from 20 to 30. The first followed the caravan on foot, and no precaution was taken, during the march at least, to secure them; but the men were linked two and two together, by a pole about 8 feet long, an end of which rested on the right shoulder of each, and to this their right hands were chained. How my blood curdles at the recollection of the sight of these horrors, which England by the stroke of a pen, could abolish in Egypt, as she has done in Muscat and Tunis, Mussulman countries on either side. Will her statesmen delay till some other power steps in to obtain the merit of this good work? I am not sure that in Mahomedan countries we have a right to force upon their sovereigns the abolition of female slavery, as it is now so interwoven with all their habits, and as female service could perhaps be obtained on no other condition, but it must be remembered that slavery is no institution of Islam. The prophet found it established among his people, as the founders of the Jewish and Christian religion had found it before

him. The Mosaic law legalises and regulates slavery ; Christianity did not abolish it, though the Christian spirit mitigated its evils and led to its gradual though slow suppression amongst us ; and the Arabian legislation in the same way, though still barbarous enough in its provisions, improved the slave's condition, and opened the way to his freedom by making manumission a meritorious act. The poor Imam of Muscat, a youth of 72 years, has been this winter personally a sufferer in the cause of abolition. He had sent half-a-dozen horses to the Viceroy of Egypt, who in return could think of no present so suitable to the other's age as a pair of white Circassian ladies. They were put on board the Imam's ship, and were not far from their destination, when an English vessel falling in with the Imam's, overhauled her, and finding the two slaves on board carried the whole to Bombay, where the unfortunate beauties are probably now pining in not welcome liberty. Slavery, as I had hitherto seen it in Turkey and Egypt, where it is a condition perhaps more esteemed than servitude, had nothing to shock the feelings. It there resembles that old-fashioned domesticity which was known in our fathers' houses, though now extinct everywhere in Europe, unless in the remote parts of Italy and Hungary. The denunciation of slavery in the East had seemed to me hitherto mere

declamation, the mistaken application to a very different state of things of all that could be said against slavery as it existed in our colonies, and still disgraces Brazil and America. I have now seen it in the most accursed and unholy forms which rapacity or licentiousness can lend it, and I acknowledge myself an unwilling convert to the arguments that have been urged against its continuance in any shape.

The importation of fresh slaves might at least be prevented. The Pasha of Egypt exists only by the will of the European powers: detested by his family and people, he has nothing to hope for from the Porte if their countenance be withdrawn. His dominions are the principal passage for the importation of slaves into the Turkish Empire; the worst and most revolting effects of this traffic are at their height in his own palaces. A single note from the powers which guarantee him in the possession of Egypt would suffice for its suppression. I heard an anecdote, whose truth there can be no reason to call in question, the person from whom I had it having been himself present when the order arrived. It was a commission addressed to the Kashef of one of the places bordering on Abyssinia, an honest old Turk, whom I had not the pleasure of seeing, to purchase for the Pasha's private school (he is a pro-

moter of a certain sort of education) 24 Abyssinian boys, answering to the description appended to the order. They must be from 12 to 14 years old, with bright rosy complexions, slim stature, large full eyes, and finely chiselled noses. After hearing the order read, the old Kashef burst into a transport of fury : "What have bright complexions and large eyes to do with a capacity for learning? I am sent here to govern a province, not to buy slaves;" and other things he said which I may not commit to paper.

His non-compliance when known in Cairo will probably produce his recal, and he will be lucky if no worse happen to him.

We now entered a large grove of *Talch* trees (طلع) whose smooth straight stems and white thorns looked as though they had just been white-washed. They are preparing to throw out their leaves at the commencement of the approaching rains, and have made their spring toilet, casting off the blackened bark of last year, and appearing now of a greenish white with large spots of pale brown. They yield a tolerably white gum of second-rate quality, which is commonly sold in Europe as gum Arabic. During the rains it exudes in large drops from the branches, and is gathered by the Arabs during the winter months after it has hardened. The best quality is that called *Hashab* (هشاب), but we did not meet

with the tree which produces it: its gum is found in larger masses than that of the *Talch* and it is of a glittering white. All the thorns in this country produce more or less gum, but these with a third sort, the *Kakamut* (ككموت), whose gum is of a topaz colour, yield it most abundantly. Emerging from this into an open plain we had to the left and in front of us low hills, Harakat, on which were several villages composed of groups of the round conical-roofed huts of the country.

These last days I had been very unwell indeed, and had I been alone I should probably have staid at Wady Hamud for a few days to try upon myself the effects of my medicine chest. As it was I had recourse to an Arab remedy, a coffee-cupful of melted butter. The butter we had procured at Kassalah was almost too rancid for even Arab cookery, as a drink it was indescribably bad. The worst castor oil is not worse than this beverage, and the effect is in so far similar that during the rest of the day it was impossible to forget it; as a medicine it was quite ineffectual, notwithstanding its nastiness, which had given me great hopes of the good it was to do me, but perhaps I had taken too small a quantity. In the afternoon I came upon a herd of camels and I promised myself to try their milk, a favourite remedy, but we had



scarcely appeared in sight when, I suppose divining my intention, the herdsman ran off at a canter and was soon hidden crouching among the grass. This was one of the painful days one sometimes has in travelling; obliged to go on, and at every step of the camel feeling as though one must break down. At length we met a caravan in which were some she camels and their foals; from their owners I obtained "for the love of God" a large bowl of foaming milk, and its effect in relieving me of the oppressive sickness of the last ten hours was almost immediate. Throughout this country I have found the natives, though very timid, good-natured and obliging when caught; but to catch them is not easy. They are certainly a very superior race to the Egyptian fellah, superior in communicative intelligence, and untainted with his shameless rapacity. I do not remember to have been asked for a *backshish* in the whole of Soudan, and what was given was always received with frank thanks, as if welcome, but not due. A more humane government is all that is wanting to raise this country to a state of great prosperity. The Atbara is full of islands offering thousands of acres of the richest land to cultivation almost without labour; and a network of canals intersecting the island of Meroe, the triangle formed by the Atbara, the Rahat and

the Nile, would more than double the productive soil of Egypt.

Having reached the hills we crossed them, passing through a small village whose inhabitants seemed miserably poor, and then over an undulating country reached a group of wells an hour from our destination, Suk-abu-Sin, and here as it was already past sunset, we slept.

### CHAPTER XIII.

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Camel-Saddle—A Divan—Adieu to Master George—Travelling Companions—Art of Flattery—A Runaway Camel—Grass on Fire—Locusts—A Fine Fellow—How to procure Camels—Lose the Track—Arab Lodgings—Desert Biscuits—Female Adornment—Slow Travelling—Old Christian Relics—Approach Chartum.

*April 14th.*—Almost before the sun, the kashef and 'Aoud el Kerim, son of the great sheich of all the Shukrieh Arabs, who was in this neighbourhood to collect the tribute, came to escort us to Suk Abu Sin, with a troop of attendants, all mounted on dromedaries, and spare beasts for us to ride. It was a gay beginning for a Good Friday, and an earlier one than I would have fain made, as there was no chance of getting any further that day, and the indisposition I had been some time suffering from, would have made another hour or two of sleep welcome. I got up, however, and dressed to join the party, who were sitting on the shady side of my tent, and as the kashef seemed impatient to be gone we presently all mounted, and started at a good pace. Off we went, scampering at a full canter, up hill and down dale, sometimes a dozen of drome-

daries in a line abreast, sometimes gathered together in a confused knot, according to the nature of the ground, but without drawing rein till in about twenty minutes we arrived at the village, which it took our luggage more than an hour to reach. It was a really enjoyable ride, the speed and ease of the movement being rendered more exhilarating by the bright morning air. The dromedaries we mounted had the saddle used in all this tract of country, called the *machlufeh* (محلفه), to an Englishman's eye more business-looking and more manly than the heavy old-woman saddle of the Hedjaz with all its tinsel millinery. They bear the same relation to one another as a hunting saddle to a Somerset. The *machlufeh* is formed of ebony or sant wood, like two Ys reversed, the arms of the Y resting on leather cushions, to avoid galling the back; to the legs which rise before and behind are fastened with thongs, in a very ingenious manner, two boards about eighteen inches long, scooped out to form the seat, leaving between them a space, so as not to risk touching the hump. This is covered with leather, over which a sheepskin (a dandy or a great sheich has this dyed scarlet) is thrown. The woollen girth is fastened with leather cords on each side, usually ornamented on the right side with large tassels of leather, and the breast-band (*lebab*)

is formed also of a plaited leather belt. The whole has a simple but knowing look, which for service is preferable to any camel saddle I ever saw, and though one has little or no hold, it forms, with the legs crossed in front, a very pleasant, easy seat, at a trot or gentle canter.

We had only time to drink the coffee which was handed at once on our arrival at the group of huts which form the kashef's residence, when an Abyssinian ox-skin, large enough to have belonged to a giraffe, was stretched upon the ground; on this a stool and tray were placed, and a long series of dishes, the first meal of the day, was served. I looked on, whilst the rest of the party made an abundant meal, for the kashef's cook was not a bad one, and I was struck with the good taste with which, after twice asking me to sit down, no further notice was taken of my refusal, beyond asking if there was anything I could fancy. During the breakfast a young Copt, a dark, serious-looking young man, came in; he was also invited to breakfast, and on his simply answering that it was a fast, bread, with a dish of honey, were at once ordered for him. At mid-day and in the evening the same attention was repeated, six or eight people sitting down at each meal round the small tray. The only thing peculiar to the country, was the durrah bread

which was laid, like a rolled-up napkin, round the circumference of the tray. It is eatable, though acid to the taste and heavy to the stomach. When kneaded, it is left to ferment, after which it is rolled out into very thin wafers about two feet in diameter: these are slightly baked upon a large disc of stone or earthenware, so as to continue perfectly soft; as they are removed from the "girdle" they are laid one above the other, and then rolled up half-a-dozen together. Thus we passed two days, generally eating, sometimes sleeping, or smoking and playing at dominoes, a polite accomplishment, which, to my astonishment, when called upon to join in the game, I found that I had acquired intuitively, never having before attempted it, though I had often, in the cafés of Paris, wondered how grown-up men could so spend their time. One of the foreign consuls had given a set of dominoes to the kashef, and he and Sheich 'Aoud el Kerim played at it for love with great eagerness and much noise, the sheich having the art of concealing in his huge paw an extra piece, so that he placed two at a time, which occasioned much laughing altercation. He was here to collect the *tolba* (tribute) from the dependent chiefs, and on the morning of our departure I was present at a divan held for this purpose among our boxes, which were being packed

for starting. A rather large circle of dark men, squatted on the ground, was formed round us, and each as he was called upon stood up and came into the centre. It was not money but slaves which were required, and I afterwards learned that this was a requisition in addition to the fixed tribute, which is paid in money. It is one of the ingenious contrivances by which Abbas Pasha keeps the word of promise to the ear, without his treasury being a sufferer for his good faith. The stipulated *tolba* of the Shukrieh Arabs is sixteen hundred purses a-year. This year one hundred and fifteen slaves have been called for in addition, and besides this, constant demands are made for cattle for the supply of the troops, and camels for transport. This last especially, falls very hardly upon them. One of the sheichs called up was a defaulter; sixteen slaves had been assigned as the share of his tribe, and he did not produce one, though he alleged the delivery at different times during the year to some one not present, of ten slaves. "Well," said the sheich quietly, "you must bring the remaining six, and give me a written declaration of the times and places in which you consigned the rest." The decision did not seem to please the poor man whose plea was probably a false one. Another produced the two demanded of him, strong-built, jet-black youths, of

about sixteen, whose sturdy limbs excited the admiration of the whole assembly; the slaves were passed from one to another, and handled as if they had been cattle.

This village had been only lately founded, but the market held here every Monday, is now the principal gum mart in the neighbourhood, having already in great measure superseded that of Gadárif, a larger place, about two hours off, round which Arab settlements are so numerous, that eighty villages are said to drink of its abundant well.

We here took leave of good Master George, whose patience and complaisance on all occasions had excited my admiration. The journey he had made with us is at all times a fatiguing one, but in company with Franks who consulted no one's convenience but their own, and whose wayward habits are so different from those of the country, the trial which he bore admirably, was doubly severe. He and our newly made friends accompanied us to the first well outside the village, when after exchanging the usual embraces, they turned and left us. The sheich had insisted upon giving my companion and myself a present of a camel a-piece, beasts of little value, such as I should never have bought, and which will cost twice or three times what they are worth in a return present. The kashef had also paid the hire of our



camels to Abu Harras, which we only learned at the last moment, but in time to return him the money, with a message as if we considered it an advance made on our account. It was an inconvenient kind of politeness, for having paid in full we had little hold on our camel-men, and were put to some inconvenience by their instant departure on our arrival at Abu Harras. We had now lost the services of Master George, and of Mr. Kotzika's servant, and did not cease to regret them during the remainder of the journey. It is most important in these countries to be accompanied by some one who understands the way, after a very roundabout one, of dealing with the natives.

We had been joined in quitting Kassalah, by three other wayfarers, who took advantage of the occasion to travel in a numerous company. One was a Persian, ex-cavass of Mehemet Ali, now established in Sennar, who was only going with us as far as Suk Abu Sin, whence his road lay southwards. A second was an honest trader of Kassalah, son of one of the Moghraby guardsmen of the same prince, who was carrying a little venture to Wed Medinah, and was on all occasions ready to offer his services. The third, Hassan, was destined to be our companion for long, and deserves a more particular description. He is a Turk by birth or origin,—I suspect the latter,—an

*Abdallahwy*, as the Turks born in Egypt are popularly called from their tendency to corpulence. The *Abdallahwy* is a spherical melon. He had been for ten years in Abyssinia, part of the time in the service of one of the European Consuls, part in that of a Missionary. Tired of this life he had come with a companion into Soudan, where they had enrolled themselves among the Turkish Irregulars stationed at Elmit Kenab; but on their antecedents becoming known to the Mudir of Kassalah, of whose rude fanaticism I have already spoken, he struck them off the roll, saying, "that Turks who had served Christians were unworthy to serve their Sovereign." His companion thereupon entered the service of the commander of the Irregulars as cook, turning his sword into a spit and exchanging his pistols for pans, while Hassan came on to Kassalah to seek his fortune. Not finding it there, he asked leave to accompany our caravan as far as Suk Abu Sin, where he proposed to offer himself as a soldier to the kashef. Whether he did so or not, I never learned, but at our departure we found him again in our suite, but this time mounted on one of our camels. He had determined to go with us to Cairo, or indeed, to the world's end if we pleased, and having thus adopted us, he was ready to make himself very actively useful. He was an excellent traveller,

always in good humour, chanting from the top of the loaded camel Turkish airs more melodious than the melancholy complaints of Egypt, and amusing the other servants in the evening with wonderful stories of his prowess in lion hunts, or his experiences of the barbarism of Abyssinia. I overheard him one evening tell with a thousand asseverations of his veracity, an adventure which happened to a tame monkey belonging to Mehemet Ali, which seemed to obtain implicit credence from his hearers, better judges than I am of the habits of these our elder brothers. This monkey like many of the younger race was fond of soldiering, and had taken a special fancy to the department of the artillery, so that whenever a salute was to be fired, he was sure to be on the battery. One day at Jidda, on occasion of some public rejoicing which in the East, even more than in the West, is always accompanied by the burning of much gunpowder, he was as usual at his post, giving all the signs of a knowing approbation as each gun was discharged. One of them, however, hung fire. The monkey, anxious to ascertain the cause ran up and put his head into the muzzle, evidently the surest way of finding out what was the matter, when at that moment the charge exploded and poor Jacko disappeared, much to the grief of his master. He was already, perhaps like all

absent favourites, forgotten, when one day a vessel arrived from Sawakin bringing the monkey safe and sound, with a letter from the Governor to the Pasha. Jacko had come, no one knew how, to Sawakin, and being recognised as being in his Highness's service, the Governor had hastened to dispatch a vessel to carry him back. The story may, perhaps, furnish a hint to some Atmospheric Conveyance Company.

No one questions the talents of orientals for adulation \*; Hassan, as becomes the thorough rogue that I doubt not he is, is one of the most dexterous I ever met with. I doubt that the vanity of even Louis XIV. himself in all his glory ever found a more delicate flatterer than this free-spoken, unlettered ragamuffin. He possessed in perfection that vulgar bluntness of speech which so often passes with the simple for honest frankness, and not seldom serves as a veil for the deepest cunning. After we had parted with Mr. Kotzika's servant who received a handsome backshish for his attentions, Hassan

\* Flattery, by insinuation, is the *forte* of the Turks. I had a specimen of this one day from the cavass of one of the Consulates in Cairo, which amused me exceedingly. He had brought several letters to my house, and after delivering one of them, he lingered pertinaciously in the room in a way which betokened a wish for, or a hope of, backshish. "I have no money about me," I said, "but I will tell my servant to give you a present the first time he sees you." "If your excellency did not give me backshish, to whom should I look for it!" was the answer.

took an opportunity of saying with a deep sigh, "Poor Salech!" "What ails Salech? Is it on account of the camel which died that you pity him?" "Oh no! what is a camel? I sighed to think how much he is to be pitied for having to part from *you*."

The remainder of the journey to Abu Harraa was as uninteresting as any country I ever passed through, and a few words will suffice to describe it. The flat plain which we traversed for thirty hours, an alluvial soil, covered with long dry grass, offered no object to arrest the attention and nothing which could be twisted into an adventure, unless some amiable reader be sufficiently interested in me to hear the history of another tumble from camel-back. This, the third proof of my dexterity in the graceful exercise of tumbling, will I hope be the last, as I flatter myself I have now served a sufficient apprenticeship to the art of camel-riding. A dromedary I had obtained at Suk Abu Sin for my own riding did not answer my expectations, or rather the saddle was badly put on,—not an easy thing to do well, by the way,—and one of my servants who saw how out of patience I was at the many times I had had to dismount to have it arranged, persuaded me to try the one he was riding, the sheich's present. I had my large saddle transferred to his beast, and, nothing doubting, mounted it. He had not only no nose-

string, but was besides a vicious brute; rising with a violent jerk before I was well in the saddle, and anxious to join the caravan, which was a little way ahead, he set off at his roughest gallop. Carpets, kufieh, tarbush, all went off in the jolting; at every step I was thrown a foot into the air, glad to come down again, bump, bump, on the saddle, by dint of holding on to the front pommel with the left hand, while the right was engaged with the bridle, which in the violence of the exercise it was impossible to change to its proper hand. I had almost reached the caravan, and had no doubt my humpbacked Pegasus would relax his exertions, when a camel-driver, one of the sons of iniquity, seeing me come up at full speed, and evidently quite run-away with, took it into his head to come to my assistance. I saw what he was at, and called out to him to get out of the way, but instead of this, he stuck himself straight before me, stretching himself out like a St. Andrew's cross, with one hand armed with a huge club, and making most diabolical grimaces. Of course the camel was frightened, it was enough to frighten a much more reasonable being, so wheeling quickly round, it upset my unstable equilibrium, down I came head foremost to the ground, and when I looked up, my forehead streaming with blood, the first thing I saw was my Arab with the

camel which he seemed mightily pleased with himself for having so cleverly captured, while the servant who had suggested the unlucky experiment, came ambling along on my easy-paced dromedary, and consoled me by saying that he knew it was a runaway beast which there was no riding without a nose-string. I now began to study the way of keeping one's seat in such an emergency. An Arab when he gallops his dromedary with one of these saddles, holds hard on with the right hand to the

back part of the seat, not to the pummel, and grasps the bridle tightly in the other. The movement of the camel in galloping throws one violently forward, and without holding on, excepting on the naked back when the rider sits behind the hump, it is impossible to retain one's seat. I afterwards thought myself lucky in not having studied this point sooner, as from the greater resistance I should have offered, my tumble, since it was fated I should have one, would probably have been much more severe. It is true I might also have escaped it, but in the chapter of probabilities I always think a mishap the most probable.

Nine hours after starting we were abreast of a hill, Gibel Gadembaliah, lying some miles on the left, which for hours had seemed close ahead, and to which we seemed never to get any nearer.

On the second evening we slept among some low groups of granite blocks which rose abruptly like ruined pyramids from the flat plain, between the range of Gebel 'Atash far on the left, and Omm el Kerud on the right. There is water in Gebel 'Atash but not as I was told either thermal or mineral, and I made particular enquiries, for I remember reading somewhere of a hill of this name where is a remarkable hot spring, but the name itself, signifying "hill of thirst," is not uncommon. Six hours further on still in the same level, we reached three other granite groups, one of them a curious three-peaked rock called Sergain. During one of these days, when we stopped to rest under some thin trees which afforded an illusory shade, by a servant's negligence, the fire kindled to boil the coffee, was communicated to the high dried grass. In a few seconds a long volume of black smoke rolled along an immense line, beneath which the red flames sometimes hardly visible crept steadily along, sometimes when they reached a taller tuft, leaped high in flickering tongues, with loud crackling detonations. Above the volumes of smoke which hung heavily in the air the falcons gathered together, watching the grasshoppers and lizards and snakes which were dislodged by the fire, and from time to time darting into the very flames in pursuit of



their prey. The conflagration with the winged attendants it had attracted, reminded me strongly of those paintings of purgatory with which tasteless piety has bedaubed so many of the walls in the south of Italy. At night, though we had gone four or five hours beyond it, the long wave of fire was still visible, reddening the sky above.

Twenty-seven hours from Suk Abu Sin, we entered a thicket of low thorns, through which our road lay during three hours, till we reached a group of ill-smelling wells, the first water we had found, situated in the range of hills called Kala 'at 'Arang (عرانق). These hills extend in a long curve east by south, and the road traverses the more northerly horn. On either hand are numerous villages of the Rikabin Arabs, so effectually concealed in the hills that no passer would suspect their existence. Of all the wells, here forming a group of ten or twelve, one only gives tolerably sweet water, the other being strongly impregnated with some alkaline matter which made the water unite readily with soap. The smell betrayed the presence of sulphur, and the Arabs who had assembled the next morning to draw water for their cattle, seemed well inclined to prevent our filling our casks from the only drinkable one. While our camels were being loaded, I was accosted by a cleanly dressed old gentleman whose white beard

contrasted with the darkness of his face. Like ourselves a traveller, he had spread his carpet beneath a neighbouring tree, and came to enquire the news. He told us that he was brother-in-law as well as cousin of the great sheich, and that he was now on his way to bring home from Gadàrif a young bride whom he had married last year, but who was then too young to leave her family. During five hours of the twelve which it took to reach the river Rahad, we rode along the base of these hills, passing through one small hamlet which lies at the entrance of the pass in which we had spent the night. The ground was here entirely covered with a thorny thicket like that we had ridden through the preceding evening, among which fluttered myriads of a large rose-coloured locust about four inches long, which flew with a rustling noise from bush to bush as we passed; whether their food be the dry grass or the withered leaves, of which a few still hung on the branches I could not ascertain, though the latter seemed more probable, as I saw none on the ground. The geological structure of the country between the Atbara and Rahad is curious, as it is a great alluvial soil from which a few low granite peaks rise here and there abruptly without any rising of the soil round their bases, like the summits of submarine mountains seen above the sea. We did not go

down to the river for which we had been making, the road running at some little distance to the north of it, but up to Abu Harras we never lost sight of the green line of trees which marks its course to the left. Missing the two villages called Hillal-esh-shurefah from the names of two sherifs Yakoub and Ayoub who died here in the odour of sanctity, we passed the night before our arrival at Abu Harras encamped near a tribe of Arabs living pêle-mêle under trees, without any kinds of tents. It seems that this road is frequently travelled over by sherifs of the Hedjaz who go to Sennar, Kordofan, and even Darfur and Waday, where they enjoy very great authority. The sovereigns of both these countries especially pride themselves on their sherif's descent, which they never omit among their titles. I have spoken already of the fine race of bronze-coloured men who inhabit this country, and cannot resist describing one whom we met this afternoon. Bare-headed, his hair falling in long ringlets round his shoulders, he was mounted on a light-limbed dromedary, his fine athletic bust exposed to the waist, round which a white scarf with blue stripes of silk at the ends was wound, leaving the legs free; a straight sword, and oval buckler of hippopotamus hide were hung on the right side of his saddle, which was covered with a blue sheep-skin; a tanned

goat-skin on the other side contained his provisions, and perched behind him on the bare back of the camel was a little black slave. There was something so manly in his figure and so characteristic of the unfettered son of the wilderness, who carries his all with him in so small a compass, that I noted him more than any of the other parties or single travellers whom we met, though many of them, and especially one who protected his delicate complexion with a party-coloured conical parasol, a rare precaution, were remarkable enough to be remembered. In travelling, it is rare to see the people of these countries adopt any protection against the sun, the thick hair serves effectually as a turban to guard the head, and their soft satin-like skin, insensible to scorching, seems to repel its rays. "We are children of the sun," said one of them to me one day, in refusing a place which I offered him in a narrow shade I had taken possession of.

Abu Harras, once a place of some importance, is now a mere collection of straw huts hardly larger than Suk Abu Sin, its trade having been absorbed by the town of Wed Medina, lying about six miles to the south-west. It is the residence of the Egyptian Mudir and the station of a considerable body of troops. We were here encamped on the Blue River, immediately below the confluence of

the F d, and during the two days that we passed on its high precipitous bank, the colour of the water corresponded to its name. Many flat islets or eyots interrupt its sluggish stream, which was now at the lowest, and they were remarkable from not being shelving banks, but edges sinking perpendicularly into the m which I infer that when swollen with the s the course of the river must present a very d ent character. We had hoped to find boats h n which to descend to Chartum, but in this we were disappointed, and tired as one grows of the camel after thirty days of land journey, no choice remained but to resume the saddle. Not easily decided upon, our resolve was difficult to execute. Our camels the moment they had deposited our baggage by the river had levanted, leaving our man and the guide behind to secure the backshish, and no others were to be found in the neighbourhood. In this emergency, counselled by a retired officer living here on quarter pay, who had paid us a visit on our arrival, we applied to the Turkish Kaimakan for assistance. He took what turned out to be the most effectual means of freeing us from the dilemma, by at once imprisoning our guide and the camel-driver who had remained, promising that if camels were not forthcoming next morning that he would add a flogging

to the imprisonment. The proceeding seemed somewhat illogical, for the camels that had brought us were declared to have returned, but it was successful, for next day we had as many as was required, only, however, to carry us one stage to the residence of the great sheich. It was late in the day before the camels were all ready, but as Rifa'a was only four hours distant on dromedary, we determined to ride on before them, and the road being a straight one and the distance short we did not fail like conscientious travellers in search of the uncomfortable to meet with a little adventure. It wanted still nearly ten hours to sunset, so that by riding briskly we should arrive at the sheich's in good time for supper, and as there was no time to spare, when a little way outside the town we discovered that our guide had loitered behind, it did not seem worth while to wait till he could be sent for. After all, a guide was not necessary to conduct us along a high road daily traversed by numerous caravans, so stopping the first man we met we got from him minute directions as to our course, receiving the assurance that there was only one place where we could possibly go wrong. On we went therefore with renewed confidence; we had determined to claim the sheich's hospitality for that night, and of course were anxious to arrive at a reasonable

hour, for we are considerate travellers who give no trouble which can be avoided. We soon came to the doubtful turn in the road, and then we diligently chose the wrong one, but without at all relaxing our pace. The setting, and we were naturally surprised by the thick briars we were picking our way well as at the numerous cattle tracks ed the road in every direction. We o great pains to go wrong not to be sure we were right, and a couple of herdsmen whom we caught after a hot chase confirmed us in our good opinion. On we went again, carefully keeping in the rapidly closing darkness, the direction they had pointed out, but when our watches assured us that we had arrived at our destination, neither the blue river, nor the mud palace of the sheich, nor the village, was in view. A new light at length burst upon our darkness, metaphorically, for we at last began to suspect that we were in the way of the erring, literally, for while we were still hesitating what would be best to do, a bright light visible on the right hand seemed to promise at least a guide. We conjectured that it was a village, and for half an hour made straight for it, though we thus turned back from the road we had been following. The further we went, the more impenetrable became the thorny

jungle, our cotton robe left many a rag suspended from the boughs, but still we did not seem to come nearer to our mark. At last the breadth of the flame made it evident that it was no watch-fire which we had taken for a beacon, and applying the charitable maxim of judging others by ourselves, we now suspected that we were not the only people who set a whole country in a blaze to make a cup of coffee, and that the flame we saw was the conflagration of the dry grass and thorns. We now, therefore, drew up, but the only servant we had with us, the zealous Hassan, insisted on riding forward to make assurance sure. After we had passed an hour, waiting for him, stretched on the ground by the side of our dromedaries, the silence of the night enlivened by the occasional howling of a jackal or the screeching of some bird of prey, he returned, having satisfied his scruples and lighted his pipe at the fire. Rifa'a had evidently got out of our way. It was not easy to decide what we should do next. There was no moon, but under a large star we thought we heard the distant baying of dogs. To this, therefore, we turned, and moving with some little caution among the tall gum-trees we soon found ourselves in a place which we recognised as that where we had spoken with the herdsmen. All of a sudden our servant's camel made a dead



stop, and then turned suddenly round. Hassan is fresh from Abyssinia, where he pretends to have been no stranger to lions. He pronounced that there was a lion in our path. But Hassan is no coward, and in an instant he had jumped from his camel, and with his long bayoneted rifle he advanced cautiously to the attack. A sound very like the whispering of human voices seemed to me to proceed from the place where the king of beasts was said to be crouching, but nothing daunted the self-devoted Hassan still went on. As he approached and gained a full view of the monster it became evident that it was a black lion! an astonishing fact which he communicated in a muffled whisper. He again crept forward, crouching, to get a near shot; as he came on two men ran away from behind the wild beast, and a fine pair of curved horns which became visible could belong to no other than the genus Bos. Hassan's desire to distinguish himself, or his imagination, it could not have been his fear, had transformed a cow into a lion, but he had displayed his courage, and well pleased with himself he remounted his dromedary. I had sat quietly watching our valorous attendant's proceeding without any misgiving as to the result, for I knew that in the dangerous neighbourhood of a wild beast our dromedaries would not have stood so quietly, and

I suspected that our Turk would probably have shared their instinctive aversion to it. I was not then aware that lions are frequently met with three or four degrees north of this. We continued in the direction of our star, again heard, and this time more distinctly the barking of dogs and soon saw the feeble fire. We rode straight to one of them, and the barking became perfectly frantic as we stopped at an impenetrable fence of dead thorns, within which was the fire which had attracted us. After much screaming on our side, and many surly responses from within, one of the bushes forming the gate was removed by the proprietor of the mansion to give entrance to our dromedaries. A few blows of a stick distributed in all directions silenced the canine opposition, and our carpets were spread on the ground, while the shyness of our host gradually lessened as the fire on which he had heaped dry sticks kindled up. By its flame we were able to distinguish some of the details of our chance lodging. Behind the fireplace a tall structure of dead boughs which would be considered a model of this style of art as the chimney-piece of a rustic cottage, served to suspend water-skins, bowls, and other articles of furniture; near it a mat tent from which issued voices of women still invisible in the darkness, and filling the rest of the

inclosure some twenty she-camels and a couple of donkeys lay around us. Coffee was soon made and distributed to our guests (according to Osmanli etiquette we were now the masters of the house), a bowl of camel's milk was obtained from one of our bedfellows for the night; our saddle-bags were as usual on an emergency found to be empty of eatables, but the care of the ladies of the household did not allow us to go supperless to bed. A huge bowl of a sticky paste made with hot water and durrah flour without salt (*melecha*) was soon served to us, and our host produced with no little pride in a dirty piece of paper a handful of the small red pepper of Abyssinia, *sheteitah* (شيتية) and coriander seeds, which he pressed upon us as a delicate condiment to the mess. Two or three women and four youths of various ages formed the family of our host; the latter gradually gathered round us from the hiding-places in which they had been concealed, and before we had finished the short supper which politeness obliged us to gulp down, some neighbours, attracted probably by the barking of the dogs, if they were not as I suspected the churls who had been hidden behind the cow-lion, came in to have a look at us. A fresh brew of coffee sent them away contented, and wrapping ourselves in our cloaks we were soon sound asleep.

The next morning betimes after such a toilette as circumstances permitted, scanty indeed for I saw that our host grudged me the little water he allowed me for washing, we set off with a guide for Rifa'a, which, so well had we calculated our route on the previous night, was still four hours distant. In passing through a village on a low hill, called Er-rufayin, we stopped under a large tree near the sheich's house to make a cup of coffee, and though he had gone from home, our carpets were hardly spread when two bowls of the national drink, the 'abry (عبري), were sent to us from the harim. This is a very thin wafer of durrah broken into small particles, on which water, sometimes with the addition of red pepper, is poured. After standing for a few minutes the water acquires a cool acid taste which is very grateful, and the nourishing drink thus produced is said to be extremely wholesome. The durrah for preparing this kind of bread is first ground into a coarse meal between stones, it is then wetted with water, and subjected to the action of the stones until it has acquired the consistency of a thick cream; it is left for three days to ferment until it becomes quite acid, when it is finally rolled into very thin wafers about eighteen inches in diameter, and spread upon a hot plate of earthenware like the common bread of the country;

the baking is very slow as the wafer is not coloured, while it becomes perfectly brittle. In this condition it will keep for many months, and no native of these countries travels without a supply of it in his saddlebags. It might perhaps prove a useful addition to a ship's stores on long voyages, the acid which it contains having, in the opinion of the people of Soudan, the same purifying effect on the blood as that of the lemon.

At some distance from Rifa'a men on camels and donkeys met us; these were a son and some dependents of the sheich sent to seek for us. Our caravan had arrived during the night, and early in the morning the servants had gone to enquire for us at the sheich's house, not doubting that we were here. He and they were in consternation at our disappearance, he, no doubt, in real fear, because still smarting from the heavy fine imposed upon him for the robbery by one of the tribes of his territory of two French naturalists, he dreaded that some equally expensive mishap might have befallen us; they perhaps rather in simulated concern, because servants in this as well as in other countries, willingly increase their own importance by making a fuss about their masters. His sons were at once all mounted, and sent with many servants in every direction to look for us; the eldest of those at home

being the lucky fellow who found the stray sheep. Near the village we were joined by the sheich himself, mounted on a tall dromedary with crimson sheep-skin, and he accompanied us to our tents, near which he had had a large Egyptian one pitched to serve us as a divan. Sherbet and coffee were soon followed by a dish of vermicelli, dressed with sugar and butter and very slightly flavoured with onions. It is a national dish, and however strange the flavouring, by no means to be despised, worthy even of a place in the carte of the Frères Provençaux, beside the *morue* and the *bœuf à la provençale*. A couple of sheep for dinner, an ardeb of wheat, twice as much durrah for the camels, were the hospitable gifts of our magnificent and wealthy host. We found this style of treating in good taste, a single dish sent from the harim to stay the cravings of appetite on our first arrival, and the materials of a dinner (imagine the baking that an ardeb of wheat would have required!) to be dressed according to our taste by our own Frank cook.

Our tents were pitched on the bank of the river, at the place where the servants went down to fill their jars for the supply of the sheich's establishment. This part of the domestic arrangements is the care of the female slaves. I had there an opportunity of admiring the pitch to which the passion of

the sex for ornament may be carried; it put all the agonies of a coronation toilette to shame. Two of the sheich's slaves, whose only dress was a piece of cotton round the middle, had their dark bodices entirely covered with a most elaborate pattern in relief, produced by slashes, into which some extraneous matter had been rubbed to form a raised cicatrice. Pride suffers no pain, so that I suppose the operation was as agreeable as it certainly must have been protracted. The effect was pleasing, something like embossed black leather.

During the time that we were at Rifa'a, Sheich Ahmed Abu Sin made us repeated visits; he is a tall, white bearded, regular featured black, perhaps sixty years old, still robust and active, with perfectly good but very reserved manners. He is of a darker colour than most of the Soudan Arabs, but denies that his tribe is in its origin African, pretending to trace his genealogy from the Joheinah. Arabia is the Normandy whence all the African Arabs pretend to derive their nobility.\* He pressed us very much to

\* The oldest writers agree in ascribing an Arabian origin to many of the nomads who inhabited the valley of the Nile; and if the dark colour of some tribes, claiming this descent seem at first sight to contradict this statement, the effect of intermarriages in changing the complexion must not be lost sight of. It has been already remarked by former travellers that there are tribes which retain the Arabic as their language, while others, such as the Bishary, Hallanga, and Hadendoa, speak a totally different dialect. But though the Arabian origin of many at least of the former

stay some days, and on our refusal, showed more tact than is usual in the East in having camels ready for us exactly at the moment we had asked for them on the morning after our arrival. He accompanied us to some distance from the village when we set out, saying that he would have escorted us to Chartum but for an order received the previous day to furnish immediately two hundred camels for the government. He sent with us as guide one of his own people, to whom he gave the strictest injunctions to take great care of us, a recommendation which he understood so literally that he only allowed us to make seven or eight hours each day. Perhaps we were not sorry to be thus obliged to rest during the hot hours of the day. We were in a great hurry to reach Cairo when we left Sawakin; but after losing so much time, after finding the journey lengthen, as it were, the further we advanced, and

seems certain, their immigration is to be traced to times long before Islam, and no trust can be placed in the traditions by which they pretend to claim descent from any particular tribe. The great antiquity of the Arab tribes is not to be called in question, but the historical origin of these *Æthiopian Arabs*, as exhibited in their own traditions, is very obscure. The *Joheina* are a very ancient tribe, and, living on the coast, are most probably the ancestors of many of the nomads of Egypt, but there seems no historical proof of the descent here claimed. I may remark in passing, that though frequent intermarriages with *Abyssinians* have given to a large majority of the Arabs of the *Hedjaz* (at least, of those I know) a very dark copper colour, this is essentially different from the bluish black which distinguishes the tribes along the upper valley of the Nile.



the difficulties of movement become greater at each stage, we had resigned ourselves to what seemed necessity, and the more time we now spent on the road the less became our scruples at each fresh delay.

Our halt the first night at the village of Berimko was extremely pretty. It is built on a slight elevation, covered with large trees, among which the huts are scattered at considerable distances from each other. We lay down under one of the trees round which our tents were placed; and immediately on our arrival, the village sheich sent us a number of *'angaribs* for ourselves and our servants, with a supply of milk and a huge platter of the purple durrah bread. No one here ever sleeps on the ground on account of the danger from scorpions, and it is also advisable to procure *'angaribs* for the luggage to avoid the ravages of the white ants, whose voracity sometimes does incredible damage in the course of a single night. It was on the fourth day after leaving Rifa'a that we took our midday repose under the hospitable roof of the sheich of 'Alifun, a village about an hour east of the Blue river. He has a large divan built of mud for receiving guests, in itself nothing remarkable, but after the rude structures we have lately seen, it looked like a pacha's salamlik. I caught myself admiring walls

which form almost right angles with each other, small windows furnished with wooden shutters turning upon hinges, and a rude door which had never seen plane nor saw; this door, perhaps, was meant for ornament rather than use, but still it gave an unwonted air of comfort to the room. On the centre of each of the four walls was stuck a paper with a drawing in coloured outline, which I at first took for the representation of a middle-age helmet and neck-plate, the two eye-holes being figured by two round black spots. I found on enquiry that this was an amulet, our host telling me, almost in an apologetic tone, that it was the sandal of his prophet, adding that every religion has its prophet. The same dish of vermicelli, which we had first seen at Abu Sin's made a very good luncheon, but when an hour afterwards it was followed by a dinner of a dozen dishes, we could do little honour to our host's superabundant hospitality. It was with difficulty that we left the pleasant cool divan of Sheich Mohammed Abd-Er-rahman to continue our journey through the burning sun. We passed through the ruins of Soba, which are mere mounds of rubbish, but where Christian relics of the eighth and ninth centuries are frequently found, as well as at another town near Wed Medin. Christian gems of rude execution have been found in the bed of one of the

small affluents of the Rahad, and everything seems to prove that Christianity was the religion of this country about eight centuries ago. Not a vestige of its former existence now remains in the population; the very few Christians who are to be found in the larger towns being Copts who came here in the service of the Egyptian conquest. On the other hand everything, except their own traditions, tends to show, that the present inhabitants are indigenous tribes, probably the nomad robbers, who always hovered threateningly round the frontiers of the old civilisation. The existence of so large a town as Soba would seem to prove that the arts if not the domination of Meroë extended thus far. Egyptian sculptures have been found at Soba, as well as bronzes of Christian origin. Several inscriptions have also been turned up, written in a character closely resembling the Coptic, but with some differences and in a language which is neither Coptic nor Greek. This same evening late at night we pitched our tents on the right bank of the Blue River opposite to Chartum. Veiled by the darkness we could not see the town, though its situation was pointed out by the frequent discharge of rockets, the commanded display of loyal rejoicing for the betrothal of the Viceroy's son with a daughter of the Sultan's. No boats to cross over were to be

had; not even a cottage was visible on this bank; and the breeze wafted to us no busy hum of voices betokening the neighbourhood of a large town, though the fireworks seemed to prove that it was not distant, and that its inhabitants were not yet asleep. We were unable to procure wood to light a fire, so we had our tents pitched as quickly as possible and were soon asleep.

## CHAPTER XIV.

Chartum—Morals—The Girls—Head Dress—Its Efforts—Ivory of the Nile—Turks in Service—The Penal Colony—Art—A Patriot King. dity—A Fantasia—Dancing omology—Christian Mission The hippopotamus—The Sources School of Science—Public a Pasha arts—The Black

*April 28th.*—Life in Chartum is a strange, slipshod, uncravatted sort of existence. To describe it is difficult, but I must nevertheless attempt a faint sketch of so phenomenal a state of things. The naïve pen of a Puckler Muskau would be puzzled to paint some of the scenes which it presents, and the chaste sobriety of our mother tongue is sadly unequal to the attempt. I had filled several pages with notes, which would have been perhaps more curious than edifying, but the deep blush which has suffused my modest paper, has rendered them illegible.

Islam, so tolerant in Egypt of many things, which, if not unknown, are at least most carefully concealed in other countries, has here thrown aside even the thin veil which there partly covers its corruption. Chartum is a sort of black "Regent

Street," where every variety of vice stalks abroad with a publicity as shameless, if not as importunate, as in our own. The climate may have some share in this, but the vicinity of the barbarians of the interior (and in Africa the state of nature is not one of innocence), and the sense of desolation which is felt by the whites, whether Turks or Europeans, who are found here, tempting them to throw off the restraints imposed by society or morality, may both be accessories in promoting the strange freedom of manners which pervades every rank in the black capital. Civilisation and barbarism have met, and each has contributed its peculiar vices to the common stock. A few Europeans, the most ignorant of whom possess a degree of intellectual development rarely found among orientals, are here brought together from all nations and all classes; six weeks removed from European news, and as many months, or rather years, from the march of European refinement, they are naturally thrown upon each other for means of killing time in their self-imposed exile. Distinctions of caste are, of course, confounded, and it need not be wondered at if the forms of civilised life are in some degree neglected. With all this, and perhaps on this very account, a stay of a few days in Chartum is highly agreeable, and not without instruction. Some

hospitable friends, indeed, I shall cite, whose position removes them from the class of which I have spoken, whose accomplishments and learning would adorn an European capital, and who here worthily represent European enlightenment.

The greater number of the Frank residents are the traders of the white Nile, dealers in ivory, and sometimes, it has been whispered, in *ebony* also. Five months of the year they pass in a sort of buccaneering expedition up the river, the remainder of it being devoted to the consumption of araki, and other enjoyments which Chartum affords, and in preparations for a fresh start. The rainy season, which lasts from ten to twelve weeks—during May, June, and July—is singularly trying to the European constitution; the atmosphere is that of a vapour bath, and the moderate use of ardent spirits becomes absolutely necessary to preserve health. There is perhaps no country where spirits seem at all seasons more requisite; during the great heat of the months when I was in Soudan, I plead guilty to having imbibed more araki, mixed with water, than I had drank in my whole life previously; I sometimes took even a pint a-day, and this without ever experiencing the slightest symptom of intoxication. There are not many to whom the pursuits of natural history or botany supply an unfailing

source of useful employment, and who can busy themselves in the formation of collections, such as those of MM. de Heuglin and Peney. Few books arrive at the juncture of the two Niles; and how few men in any country possess within themselves resources enough to occupy long months of inactivity! In the ennui of a long residence in such a place, I can almost excuse the unfortunate victims of circumstances, who may acquire the fatal habit of transgressing the narrow bounds, which divide temperance from inebriety. It requires no little self command to stop short within the prescribed limits, when the frame is sinking beneath its own weight,—every nerve unstrung, and even the involuntary functions of the machine suspended, until restored to tone by the use of stimulants. The governor of the place, and the members of the Catholic mission were the only persons I saw who entirely abstained from their use, and in every case it was evident that abstinence from them produced even worse consequences than their abuse. We were indebted to the Procurator of the Mission for a small supply of wine, none being to be purchased in Chartum when we were there; in profiting by his timely kindness, I felt grieved that the possessor of such good things made so little use of them for himself. Every member of his estab-



ishment was suffering from the climate, and I am convinced that half a bottle of generous wine a-day would have restored them to health more certainly than physicking and spare diet.

Twenty years ago Chartum was a mere assemblage of leathern huts. Its position on a tongue of land, at the confluence of the Blue and White rivers, pointed it out as the seat of government. Halfayah, a few hours further down on the right bank, was abandoned, and the governor-general fixed his residence here. The houses are in general built of sun-dried bricks; a good many of them are two stories high, and almost all have gardens teeming with vegetation attached to them. The population is already estimated at forty thousand souls, and it is annually increasing, as the commerce especially with the White Nile becomes more active. Beef, mutton, durrah, vegetables, the mere necessities of life are wonderfully cheap; but every other article is enormously dear and of bad quality. Except a few tailors and shoemakers no trade is carried on in Chartum; almost every article is brought from Cairo, and sells here at five or six times its original cost. There is a certain Faraj Allah, a money-lender, established here, whether Christian or Israelite I could not learn, but whatever his faith his gains are enormous. For a bill at sight on Cairo he took nine

per cent., and this was very moderate, as his usual charge is from five to ten per cent. per month; and he has been known to make traders in want of advances pay at the rate of four hundred per cent. a year.

I have intimated that it is no easy matter to describe life in Chartum, I shall content myself with the journal of the first day. And now my conscience reproaches me for having said nothing but what is to the discredit of its inhabitants, while there is at least one praise justly due to them. Chartum is the abode of hospitality. Driven from our Scotch hills, from the Irish wilds, or wherever else she may once have dwelt, the graceful divinity has found a home in this furthest suburb of civilisation. Here she offers that hearty welcome which places everything at the service of her guest, and in conferring her favours seems to wish him to feel that all the obligation is on her side.

After waiting for a couple of hours, under the orange-trees of a garden outside the town, the arrival of our baggage and servants, we went to the Mission-house, where we asked for, and obtained leave to pitch our tents in the corner of one of the gardens attached to the establishment. After inflicting fearful wounds on a cheese, which was served to us here, flanked by a pile of equally European bread, a

luxury after our long acquaintance with the substitutes which supply its place in the wild countries we had traversed, and drank a bottle of excellent wine, which the superior put before us, we went to present ourselves uninvited, unintroducted, to Dr. Peney, a French physician long resident here. We found him in a spacious and airy house, which had once belonged to my friend Parkyns, of whom, by the way, all the world in these countries speaks well. Our reception was cordial in the extreme. Though strangers to him, we felt towards him almost like old acquaintances, for Dr. Peney's name is in every one's mouth in Soudan, where his liberality and medical acquirements have rendered him beloved by the whole population, whether Blacks or Turks. It was only on our plea of having already pitched our tents at the Mission, that he desisted from his pressing invitation to take up our abode with him; and to the credit of our modesty I must add, that in the alacrity with which we accepted the excellent dinner he offered, we almost forestalled his hospitable intentions. We had not been long enjoying the cool obscurity of the large salamlik attached to his house, whose well-watered floor communicated a grateful freshness to the air, when Dr. Genzik, a Hungarian, also in the employment of the government, arrived to welcome the travellers, whose coming,

rumour had already blazed abroad. M. de Heuglin, the Austrian consul, followed him; and Rifa'a Bey, the most accomplished of the Egyptian ulemah, also came to seek news of the civilised world from which he is banished. I had known him some years before in Cairo, and was struck by the ravages the climate had made upon him. If I told the number of "*gouttes*" imbibed during the afternoon and evening, after acknowledging the bottle of wine despatched at the mission-house, and adding, that Dr. Peney's cellars yielded their choicest stores to regale the newly-arrived guests, my reader might think himself entitled to question our moderation; but he will not doubt that we were a joyous party, who adjourned to finish the evening at the Austrian Consulate.

We had hardly seated ourselves in the trellised walk of M. de Heuglin's garden, to every post of which some strange variety of wild beast was chained, when a message came from Rifa'a Bey, inviting us to a fantasia at his house. This was an entertainment given in honour of the affiancing of the Viceroy's son to a daughter of the Sultan. The Governor and the President of the Council had already done their duty on the occasion, and it was now his turn to testify his devotion to his master by a public display of rejoicing. He received us at the door of his

house; and now I might leave the reader to admire the excess of his politeness, or the importance of those who were thus honoured; but the simple fact (facts are for the most part very simple in Soudan, where the *simplex munditiis*, "nude, but *not* clean," may in general be applied to them),—the simple fact is, that this festival was a public affair, its scene the open piazza before the house. Seats for the invited guests, forming three sides of a square, were placed at the door; lanterns and a few fire pans gave a brilliant illumination, throwing a vivid light upon the centre of the square where the performances took place, and the common herd of lookers on, who formed a wide circle behind the seated grandees. Here were the Governor of the town, the President of the Council, the various persons of note whom the place contained,—most of them, like our host, the victims of Abbas Pasha's suspicions, some of them the spies set to watch and report on their conduct. The fourth side of the square was occupied by musicians, squatted upon mats, behind whom was a group of veiled females, who beat time with their hands, and accompanied the music with loud screaming songs, while the most accomplished Almehs in Chartum danced in the centre. These *danseuses* were of the same gipsy race which furnishes the members of their profession in Egypt, and their

dance was little different from that of the sisterhood elsewhere; but, on the whole, more lively, more bacchantic, than any I had hitherto chanced to witness. The frequent exclamations, "Ah!" "Ah!" of the crowd, testified the general interest excited by their frenzied evolutions, to which the lurid flame and smoke of the fireworks, which were occasionally let off, gave an almost diabolical character. The aristocratic portion of the assembly retained a gravity becoming the public nature of the spectacle; their approbation was therefore less noisy, though not the less marked by the prolonged whiffs of smoke which followed the successful exhibition of some favourite *tour de force*. The most animated of these performances, the dance with the sabre, a rapid whirl which seemed to threaten the hands and noses of the spectators, might be produced without alteration on our stage, where it would probably meet with even more applause than here. The exhibition was, as usual, sufficiently tiresome; but I must except the *pas seul* performed by one of the dancers, Shama'a, the most graceful figure I ever remember to have seen; tall and slim, the suppleness of her limbs was equal to that of the most accomplished posture-master, and the artless grace of many of her kitten-like movements was perfectly classical.

Thus exhibited in the open air, and in public, the

dance of the Almehs is divested of that indelicacy which renders it so shocking when performed in a well-closed, well-lighted, and well-cushioned saloon. There is a charming collection of Venus-statues at Naples; each of them, viewed separately, is a masterpiece; if dispersed through the long galleries of the museum, they would offer so many points of repose for the eye, wearied with sterner beauties; but as they are now shown, shut up in a room together, the imagination is involuntarily assailed by a sense of indecency. So it is with the performances of the Almehs.

There is another race of dancing girls here, whom, by the kindness of one of our friends, we were enabled to see. Their performance is characteristic of the country, differing entirely from the Arab dance, but though sufficiently curious, so utterly monotonous and graceless as to be unbearable after the first few minutes. The dancers were black slave-girls, under the conduct of a celebrated black beauty, named, I presume characteristically, Fatibarah (fatat-el-'ibarah), "she has exceeded bounds." This lady's costume, particularly the head-dress, was most curious. The hair was drawn from the forehead to the back of the head in six hard rolls, three on each side, leaving the temples and ears entirely exposed, and gathered behind into a thick projecting

mop of corkscrew curls, forming two sharply defined tiers so strongly gummed that they offered to the hand the resistance of a horse-hair cushion. This mop is cut square at the neck and in every particular resembles the head-dresses delineated in the old tombs of Egypt. The crutch-like wooden support for the head, which is frequently found there, is still used in Abyssinia instead of a pillow, and with such an elaborate head-dress is absolutely necessary. Its thousand curls are only arranged once a month. A plate of gold beautifully embossed covered the roots of the hair above the forehead, and from this hung a number of triangles attached with chains, of the same metal. A nose-ring, on which were strung pearls and rubies, was passed through the right nostril, necklaces, bracelets of rhinoceros-horn and gold, anklets of ivory, completed, I believe, the ornamental part of her toilette. As she was enveloped in a very long half-transparent muslin scarf, wound round the body in a thousand folds, it was not easy to make an exact inventory of her costume, though I was told it was simple enough. As she danced she raised one end of the scarf, grasping it with out-stretched arm and half hiding her face, or dropping it, exposed the neck and one shoulder to view. Her slaves sang as she danced. The unvarying burthen of their



song, the breeze of the spring—time blows, but our beloved where is he?" formed a low, not in itself a musical, chant, accompanied with slow stamping of the feet, cracking of the fingers, and a booming, like the hideous noise which the pilgrims of the Holy Land make at their Zikrs. The chant was interrupted by a long shrill whistle, like an engine signal rather than anything else. The costume of the remainder of the beauties, and some of

them were really pretty, was simpler than that of their mistress, almost as simple as that of the Venus of Kranach in the Borghese gallery, whose large coral necklace and splendid hat and feathers attract the attention of all admirers of old German art. It is composed of a pair or two of horn bracelets round the wrists, the *Rahat*, the most fractional expression of a petticoat, formed of a deep fringe of leather, and a long leather necklace, to which is suspended a bunch of large cylindrical amulets, which descend midway between the waist and the knees. The so-called dance is a slow movement forward, with joined feet and bending knees, while the protruding chest and head are thrown violently back, and the arms hung straight downwards, forming a chord to the arc described by the spine. The difference between the dance of Soudan and Egypt

is as great as it is possible to conceive; the vibratory movements of the muscles of the trunk in the latter, if sometimes disgusting enough, are accompanied by no small display of activity, and even grace; in the other, the constant slow upheaving of the body in a vertical plane is both ugly and monotonous. The asps which are carved as an ornament on the temples and statues of Egypt, if set a dancing, would probably exhibit some such graces, and the profound but awkward inclination of the body with which the dance ends, when the dancer has reached the ends of the straight line to which she is limited, is also a very serpent-like movement.

The exhibition fortunately took place in the open air, for in a room it would have been impossible to bear the musky smell of the *dilkah*, with which these women were all rubbed over. This is a mixture of dourah flour, sandal-wood, cloves, and rose-oil ground together with water and some kind of grease. What these ladies used was not perhaps of the best quality, as some of my friends described it as a delicious perfume; but for my part I acknowledge the old Roman saying, *non bene olet qui bene semper olet*. The very name of Soudan fills my nostrils with the pale, slightly rancid smell, for it is universally used by both sexes as a substitute

for the bath. It is rubbed over the body till a coating of the scurf-skin is removed (such as comes away in the vapour-bath under the action of the bag), while the oily paste itself is so thoroughly imbibed by the skin that no trace of it can be detected except the same it leaves. In a climate such as the body is in constant transpiration, this operation must have, in partly cl may perhaps be as salubrious as it the reverse according

to our notions. It may be fairly conjectured that so nauseous a refinement among barbarians must have its cause in a principle of hygienic experience.

Chartum is an excellent station for naturalists, as I was able to judge from the extensive menagerie of rare beasts collected by M. de Heuglin in a very short time, many of which are new to science. His portfolio of ornithological drawings exhibits, with rare vivacity of touch, faithful portraits of the beautiful birds which abound in this country. Their bright colours struck me the more, that I had been accustomed to regard the whole zoology of Africa as deficient in this quality. I believe the most distinguished among the guests of the menagerie were a cloaked monkey (*macaque*), of which no specimen has ever before been taken alive, and a pair of ant-eaters, not the African pangolin, but a

dark glossy-coated *myrcophega*, like those of America. While on this subject, I may touch on the cognate one of entomology, for the sake of registering, not a scientific remark, but one which is very interesting to the daily comfort of the traveller. The plague of fleas, and other parasites, is here entirely unknown, the only bloodsucker to which one is exposed is the mosquito, which at some seasons is exceedingly troublesome. I was told of a place, further on in the interior, where they swarm in such numbers that at certain periods of the year the natives wear a slow match as a head-dress, to drive them away with the smoke. Scorpions of large size are found in great numbers, and their bite is sometimes fatal, as I learned at a village we passed through on the Blue River. Here a young girl had died from its effects the day before our arrival, but such accidents occur very rarely, and even in the south of Europe, very delicate organisations sometimes succumb to the poison of the scorpion. A large yellowish spider, a *mygale*, is also said to be venomous; its body is about two inches long, and it is so powerful that it can carry off a small lizard, and its head is armed with mandibles of such hardness as to make a grating noise when it seizes a piece of polished iron offered to its grasp. In addition to these there is a small black and winged *cimex*, whose

bite is more painful, and sometimes not less fatal than that of the scorpion.

Immediately after the rains large tracts of country are covered with a small insect, about the size of a lady-bird, and of a brilliant violet colour. From the dried specimens I think it not improbable that this is the same dye. The colour communicated to paper is brighter than that of the cochineal, and approaching to vermillion. There is another insect emitting a strong per-

fume of attar of rose. But in a country where the difficulty of finding scientific cooks is so great, and every addition to the resources of the table becomes invaluable, future travellers will I hope feel that they owe me a debt of gratitude for indicating to them a *pièce de résistance*, which even Chevet could not supply. This is a splendid boa, often ten feet long, and of the thickness of a man's arm, which the natives eat, and describe as a most delicate dish, the flesh being white like that of a fowl. I was not fortunate enough to partake of it, and all I know of it is from hearsay, and the inspection of pieces of the skin, which is used for covering knife-sheaths.

One of the most interesting establishments in Soudan, is the mission for the conversion of the pagans of Central Africa, respectable both for its object and the character of the men who compose

it. It was originally sent out nine years ago by the Roman Propaganda, under the conduct of the Jesuit Father Ryllo, who died soon after his arrival here. The members of his order did not long persevere in the arduous undertaking, and it is now in the hands of volunteers, headed by Dr. Ignatius Knoblecher, a young man of great enterprise, who, as is known to all students of African geography, has carried his peaceful investigation of the White Nile to a point beyond that reached by the warlike expeditions of Mohammed Ali. The mission is entirely supported by funds furnished by Austria, of which country Dr. Knoblecher is a subject, its object being the establishment of stations among the idolaters of the White Nile, and the redemption and education of black slave boys brought down from the interior. These it is proposed to send back to their country when they have attained the age of manhood, and sanguine hopes are entertained that they will do good service in spreading the knowledge of Christianity in the interior. The process is a slow one, but on this very account it seems to offer greater hopes of bearing good fruit in time, and should it be crowned with success, the spiritual conquest of the vast unknown regions of the centre will be among the most glorious triumphs of modern times. Artificers of various kinds, the pioneers of civilisation

and religion, are attached to the house, so that the pupils may learn and carry back to their countrymen many useful arts. The superior takes yearly journeys of inspection up the White Nile, where three stations have been established, and if, as I have every reason to believe, his patience and discretion equal his zeal and that of his fellow-labourers, they cannot fail in time to overcome the immense difficulties which surround their undertaking. Both among Turks and Arabs, Abuna Suliman, as Dr. K. is called, enjoys the highest consideration; far and near I heard him spoken of with respect, and even by the Copts, the least likely persons to appreciate his qualities. This is already a great success, alone worth the large sums which the mission has cost, for it is the breaking down of prejudices of colour and religion, if not as old as nature, older than history or tradition.

Money is unfortunately not all that has been lavished on this praiseworthy undertaking. Many of the missionaries have already fallen victims to the climate, and perhaps also to the excessive austerity of their lives, but in dying they have done good. Those who had been long enough in the country to be known, have left a memory venerated even by the pagans, and the funeral chant of one who died last year at his station up the river, Don Angelo

Vinco, a gentleman of Verona, is still sung in their assemblies, as composed by the blacks themselves.

The difficulties which oppose the success of every mission among pagans, are greatly augmented here by the fact, that the country which it is sought to evangelise is frequented by European traders, whose imprudence and violence afford too many grounds for exasperation to the natives, who revenge themselves on the inoffensive and too unresisting missionaries. It may be difficult to draw the line at which evangelical submission to violence should end. It is well understood among polished nations that the ill-doer is vanquished by offering him the left cheek when the right has been struck. But impunity only encourages the barbarian, whose sole idea of right is might; his demands only increase with compliance; violence and cupidity alternate with fear and cringing in his ill-nurtured character. I therefore suspect that the interior of Africa would be found accessible rather to the persuasions of gentle force, than of logic and meekness; and that the apostle who would bend those stubborn necks to the yoke of the gospel, must imitate the sainted prelates of whom we read in old times, that they went forth to their work of charity armed with a morning-star as well as a crosier. Some of the anecdotes which I heard when at Chartum, of personal violence offered to the



vicar-general and his colleagues, and submitted to, although they had ample means of successful resistance, while they raised my admiration of their exemplary patience, forcibly suggested this reflection.

The life of a trader on the White Nile is truly that of a buccaneer. Europeans engaged in this traffic are exposed to many hardships, but make immense gains; they are few in number, and brought together from as many nations and as different ranks in society as the buccaneers of old.

It requires no education and but small capital to embark in these speculations, which are almost always successful, and where little risk of loss is incurred. A tinworker, an armourer, a couple of naturalists, are among the traders who this year went up the river. Removed from all control of law, the trader depends upon himself for protection; but he sometimes also forgets that there is a law-giver, to whose laws he is amenable when those of man cannot reach him. Acts of wild retaliation may be sometimes necessary, for instance, to avenge a murder; and when thus motivated the people seem to have a sufficient sense of justice to appreciate and respect the lesson. Experience, however, has proved that policy will not justify a use of force, condemned alike by humanity and reason, such as is too often displayed here. The naturalists whom

I have mentioned above, have, as the story goes in Chartum, within the last few months, been guilty of an imprudence of this description, in a quarrel about the possession of a hippopotamus which they had shot but not secured; some arrows were fired at them by the natives, who claimed the monster, which had come to die on their shores. In return they poured a fire of musketry into the crowd, which, as the tale runs, destroyed 60 persons, men, women, and children. It is not easy to preach Christianity to a people who receive such treatment at the hands of Christians.

I have said that the gains of the ivory trade are immense. The profits upon 25 cantars (98 lbs. to the cantar) are sufficient to pay the expenses of the expedition up the river: 90 to 100 cantars are a common cargo; 150 is a most successful one. The cantar of ivory is at present worth in Chartum 1650 piastres; too high a price, considering what it will fetch in Liverpool and Trieste. I have called the cantar equal to 98 lbs., which is in fact the cantar of commerce in general, equal to 100 Egyptian rotls, but in this trade the *price* of the cantar continuing uniform, the number of rotls which it contains depends upon the size and quality of the ivory. Of teeth, weighing each from 25 to 60 rotls, 100 rotls go to the cantar; but it requires 150 rotls to

make a cantar of teeth ranging from 60 to 100 each; those of 5 to 24 rls. make a cantar of rls. All smaller pieces are thrown together, and 200 rls. of these are considered the equivalent of a cantar. Quantity is made to compensate for quality. In exchange for ivory the natives receive glass beads, *con* *Venezia*. Beads to the value of about 12 piastre or shillings English, are the common price for both weighing 100 rls. The trade is, however, uncertain, for not only are the

natives very capricious in their fancy for the different kinds of beads, refusing one year those which they ran after the preceding year; but it is often necessary to go great distances into the interior to buy the teeth. Besides this, there are no other means of transport for the ivory purchased than the shoulder of natives, who, when tired of their burden, often throw it down, breaking the teeth in the fall; and it not unfrequently happens that after completing a purchase, the trader finds himself unable to remove his property to his boat. There are dangers also to be encountered from tribes rendered hostile by former ill-treatment, and from sicknesses, particularly of a scorbutic nature, which the climate engenders. During the last year, two of the three missionaries stationed on the White Nile have died, and the news of the murder of a Sardinian trader

the natives, in concert it is said with his own servants, have just been received.

The hippopotamus is found in great numbers on the White Nile ; the natives kill it with spears after enticing it into a pitfall. They eat its flesh as they do that of the elephant, though both are said to be tougher than caoutchouc. The skin, of which the *curbaj*,\* the real sceptre of Egypt, is made, has, from the use it is applied to, a certain value ; and the teeth, if the purity of their white and their hardness were better known, might become an important article of commerce. They were formerly sought after by the dentists to make artificial teeth, but the demand has very much decreased, and they are now little used except for knife or sabre handles. When wounded the hippopotamus is a very dangerous animal ; it then puts forth all its enormous strength ; the rage of pain lends it agility, and in its turn it attacks its pursuer. A trader thus lost his cook this season on the White River. A hippopotamus had been wounded, not mortally ; it followed the dahabiah, and springing upon the prow half out of the water, with one bite cut the poor fellow, who was busy in his vocation, in two. When I first heard the story I was not a little incredulous, remembering the harmless-looking, carrot-eating pig, which wallows

\* Hence the Spanish *corracho*, and French *cravache*.

in a trough in the Zoological Gardens, but after seeing the powerful jaws of a skeleton specimen in Dr. Genzich's collection, within which a man can sit upright, I recognised at least its possibility.

I add here, for the sake of bringing together all I have to say on the White Nile, the information derived from M. Lafargue, one of the oldest traders in Soudan, who accompanied Dr. Knoblecher in passing the cataract, which stopped the progress of Mehemet Ali's mission. They found the passage easy of navigation, and the river beyond it, a magnificent stream 200 yards wide. At a short distance beyond this point a yearly market is held, frequented by Abyssinian and Mussulman merchants from the coast—a proof, as M. Lafargue very justly remarked, that the river must be navigable southwards for a great distance, and that there must be another great water-course running to the sea; such heavy articles as form the staple trade of this country could not be conveyed at remunerating prices by any mode of carriage but water. He suggests that a small steamer, with shifting paddles, to escape risk of injury in passing the cataracts, might be sent up with the fair prospect of reaching a point far beyond any discoveries hitherto made. Fuel is to be procured in abundance along the shores, and nothing need be feared from the people of a country which

has not yet been visited by white men. It is only in the hostilities occasioned by former visitors that any danger can originate.

I have seen an old Portuguese map in which the Nile is represented as issuing from a great lake in the centre of Africa, about the 10° of south latitude. Many persons at the present day hold this opinion, and recent discoveries have done much to confirm our belief in the correctness of these old charts. Should the opinion be true, there is probably nothing to prevent a light steamer from reaching the sources of the Nile. The lucky man who has it in his power to undertake the enterprise, will be rewarded not only with the lasting fame which must attend him who first unveils the mysterious river, but a more solid prize awaits him, for it is well known, in Egypt at least, that the Nile flows from Paradise. This was the objection made by the ulemah of Cairo to Mehemet Ali, when he sent out his expedition; it perhaps had a considerable effect in preventing its success, though it did not deter the old Pasha from the adventure. He answered them, that if the sources were found, we should then know that the River of Egypt is not the Nile. I believe that the whole expense of fitting out such an expedition, and bringing it to a successful termination, would not exceed 6000*l.* sterling. Vast regions, supposed to

be fertile with unknown treasures, might then be opened to European enterprise. The steamer must not draw more than two and a half feet of water ; it must be well armed, and part of the deck at least, protected with a permanent awning of light sheet iron covered with felt.

Can no Duke of Northumberland be found to give the funds for such an expedition ?

The waters of the White Nile are strongly impregnated with lime, and are considered unwholesome by the natives, who dig wells at a small distance inland so as to obtain the water filtered. Even the water thus purified often causes nausea and vomiting in strangers. The Blue River enjoys a much better reputation in this respect, but even its waters are not considered so good as those of the united stream further down.\* It is probable that in its long course the noxious particles are deposited, and the continued action of the sun and air upon its waters, and their agitation among the granite reefs they pass through, may also tend to render them more

\* The relative volume of the two Niles has been differently stated ; but all travellers agree as to the greater velocity of the Blue River. When I was in Chartum, the White Nile had just begun to rise, and its apparent volume was then at least equal to that of the Blue River, which was however at its lowest point. I am inclined to think that Captain Peel's measurements were taken at a time when neither river was in its normal state, and that in general the difference of volume is less considerable.

wholesome. It is well known that in the Swiss mountains, the shepherd drinks not of the deep cool stream which flows at the bottom of the narrow gorges, however near his *chalet*; experience has taught him to prefer the labour of fetching, even from a considerable distance, the well beaten water of some brook, whose foaming course among rocks has impregnated it with air.

Chartum, besides the Europeans I have mentioned, contains a considerable number of Osmanlis of distinction. The Greek Turks, for the most part the best informed and most talented of the race, have in a body fallen under Abbas Pasha's displeasure. He has visited them with this punishment; employment in Soudan being the doom of those against whom he cannot find even those frivolous accusations, on which so many of his victims have been sent to the mines of Fazoghli. We found here men who had served Mehemet Ali in every capacity, men who were therefore attached to his family and little likely to favour Abbas's scheme for raising his son, a youth of seventeen, who is said to be deficient in none of his father's qualities, except his undeniable administrative talents, to the viceregal seat. Rifa'a Bey, so well known to the scientific world in France, who has enriched the literature of his country with



many original works, besides innumerable translations, and who was long the director of the school of languages in Cairo, fell, no one knows how, under the present Pasha's displeasure, and was sent here four years ago, with a mission to open a school of "science" in Soudan. More than three years passed before he was furnished with the means of obeying this order; eight months ago the school was opened, and I found in it eighty-four pupils, not natives of Soudan, but the children of employés of the government, most of them, judging from their complexion, by Abyssinian slaves. Rifa'a Bey had been called by the sultan to fill an office in the new university of Constantinople, but Abbas, representing the importance of his labours in civilising the wild people of Soudan, obtained the withdrawal of the order. The recitation of the Koran, Arabic grammar, Turkish, reading, writing, and a little geometry, are the sciences to teach which the most learned man of the native subjects of the Pasha, was selected, supported by a staff of twelve professors, who are, I believe, all or nearly all in the same disgrace as himself. The medical officer attached to the establishment took his degree in Paris, and is so skilled a physician, that his European colleagues do not hesitate to call him to consult on intricate cases. He was the

medical attendant of Ibrahim Pasha's sons, whose service he was forced to exchange for that of these nankin-coloured youths. I could not refuse to Rifa'a Bey, who is enthusiastic on the subject of education, the distraction from the monotonous routine of his daily occupations, afforded by my visiting the school, and I heard the elder boys examined in all the branches of the "sciences" patronised by Abbas. I was astonished at the amount of instruction which, in so short a time, had been communicated to these youths. The long years generally consumed in an Oriental education, in learning the Koran, are here abridged, and the remarkable quickness which children in this country display up to a certain age, has been turned to good account. After hearing the elder pupils examined, and receiving from them a number of specimens of penmanship, I went to the lower school, which contained children from five to ten years old, divided into five classes, each of which was engaged in learning the Koran by heart. The master writes out on a board the part of the chapter to be learned, the children copy, as best they can, the characters on a sheet of tin with which each is provided, and then they repeat it in chorus, with a continual swaying backward and forward of the body, keeping the eyes diligently fixed on the tin, till they

know it by heart. I asked if I might inquire the meaning of a not abstruse passage which had just been repeated with extreme volubility by half a dozen of the boys in succession, but this was too much to require. The words are taught, every inflexion is attended to with a superstitious care, but the meaning is left unexplained, and my reader has not to be told that the Arabic of the Koran is utterly unintelligible to the vulgar. As I wondered at this strangely barbarous kind of instruction, I remembered the *propria quæ maribus* which had been taught me on not much more enlightened principles; to this day I remember the straining efforts of memory with which I repeated it without having a notion of its (so simple) application, and a vague suspicion came over me, that I had somewhere read a description of schools in other countries, which impart to the young intellect a very similar amount of knowledge to that with which it is nourished in Soudan.

It may seem strange to my readers that men who have enjoyed a European education, who pine after the society of their intellectual equals, or the comforts of their family, should accept employment in this country, when they certainly could find means of honourable existence in Egypt. The candid objector has little idea of an Egyptian

régime, of the slavery in which "Effendina," "our master," holds his servile subjects. Once in the employment of the government, the native belongs body and soul to his master, no length of service entitles him to retire, even without a pension. He is sent here to be out of the way, but a request to be allowed to resign his useless functions is almost sure to be followed by an order to repair to the mines; at best it will remain unnoticed. A case of this kind had occurred a few days before our arrival here. Ali Bey Hassib, educated in the house of Ismail Pasha, a son of Mohammed Ali's, and regarded by him as his son, was some time ago dismissed from his post as governor of a province, and sent here as aide-de-camp to the governor. He forwarded a petition to the viceroy, asking permission to retire from the service, and to live as a private individual either in Egypt or Constantinople. The answer was an order to repair at once to Keizan, to superintend the building of a new prison of which I shall presently have to speak. Being sent to occupy a government post he was not guarded, nor did it occur to the authorities here that any one could be so hardy as to evade, or refuse submission to, a vice-regal order. Mounted on fleet dromedaries, he, with a single slave, set off for his post, but seeing himself unpursued he

soon left the Sennar road, and making for Sawakin passed thence into the Hedjaz. That he had not taken the road to Fazoghli was only known by the authorities in Chartum a month after his departure; and when orders were sent in every direction for his arrest, he was beyond their reach.

In M. [redacted] service in Soudan was rather [redacted], for it was always accompanied by a [redacted] and its duration was only three years; after [redacted] if the employé volunteered to stay, he received a second step. Now the case is very different. Service here is the second degree of punishment in Abbas's mental code, and his victims know that their banishment will end only with their or his life. He has provided them, however, with the consolation which the wretched receive from seeing others more miserable than themselves, and whatever alleviation the sight of others' sufferings may bring, they enjoy in large measure. Hardly a month passes that a batch of the unfortunates, who are destined to increase the Pasha's pet colony of Fazoghli, do not pass through Chartum. After being torn from their families, sometimes long imprisoned in absolute seclusion in Cairo, sometimes at once embarked on board a steamer or a dahabiah for Assuan, according as his highness estimates the value of their speedy

departure,—they are brought here under charge of cavasses, and after a few days passed in prison are forwarded to their destination, their hands inclosed in a log of wood, and fetters on their feet weighing from eighteen to thirty pounds. A large per centage die from fatigue before reaching Chartum, and of those who hold out thus far, 75 per cent. do not survive the third year of their banishment. I heard of one convoy of sixteen persons, of whom only one survived after eighteen months. During the last year upwards of seventy of the wealthiest natives have been sent up here, among them one great sheich, Hassan Shair, who paid for himself and his tribe 17,000*l.* sterling a year in taxes. His private wealth was enormous, and in addition to the crime of owing it all to Mehemet Ali, he was also guilty of having been charged by him to look after the interests of his son Said. This was more than enough to seal his fate, and his brother, who was fool enough to visit him in prison, was detained and sentenced to bear him company. These two men, accustomed to every luxury, were brought here treated like common criminals, and though upwards of seventy years old, were refused permission to hire a boat at their own charge, to convey themselves and their fetters on their melancholy journey. They were sent

forward on foot. The head of the family being thus despatched on his travels, Abbas Pasha called his eldest son before him, and invested him with his father's authority, making him at the same time an admonitory address: "Your father was a traitor, he has gone to a place whence he never will return; you have now only me to look to, I am henceforward your father; I give you all he possessed, not doubting that you will learn a lesson of fidelity from his fate." *Discite justitiam moniti, non*

*temnere divos!* While in the hands of the fisc the property thus restored to him had been diminished by 120,000*l.* How carefully Abbas Pasha looks after the welfare of this penal colony, I had a sufficient proof when in Chartum. Finding, I suppose, that the duration of life was too uncertain at Keizan, the place to which the condemned were sent, he lately gave orders for a state prison to be built (it was this that Ali Bey was to superintend and no doubt afterwards to inhabit) in a locality chosen for its superior unwholesomeness. It is to contain no windows and only one door, and the wretches condemned to inhabit it are to be allowed only quarter rations. The original of this order may be seen in the archives at Chartum.\*

\* Abbas Pasha's career was cut short after a reign of about five years. It was only during the last three that he showed the savage

I do not pretend that all the sheichs thus sent to expire by a lingering death, are angels of probity. To have been a sheich in Egypt is of itself a certain warrant of being guilty of innumerable acts of oppression, which, to say the least, would consign a European magistrate to the hulks; but these men were Egyptian magistrates, responsible in their persons and fortunes for the collection of the taxes, and provided the taxes are duly paid up, no question is ever asked as to how the payment is effected. A hundred travellers have described the unwillingness of the Fellah to part with his money, until he has received a sufficient amount of beating to justify his weakness in his own eyes and in those of his fellows. But it was not for acts of oppression that they were condemned, but for participation in a fabled conspiracy to substitute Said Pasha for Abbas, a conspiracy in whose existence no one believed, but which had been invented by Abbas and his friends as a pretext for getting rid of obnoxious persons, and carrying out the darling project of his life, the exclusion of the other members of the family from the succession, in favour of his son. Whether the effrontery of those who published, or the credulity

madness which, towards the end, became so frantic. In this time 1023 individuals had reached Keizan, of whom, when the order came for their release, only 240 survived.



of those who believed, this ridiculous accusation be most to be admired, those who know Egypt well may determine. Gossip, which is as little trustworthy here as elsewhere, and here perhaps even more venom-to elsewhere, has not hesitated to assert who credited the story were induced y weighty, if private, arguments.

The Pasha's ves, however, the praise of impartiality, for it strikes the poor as well as the rich, and while most of the wealthiest sheichs in Egypt have already felt the weight of his displeasure, and all are no doubt destined to do so, he has given them as companions not only many heinous malefactors from the very dregs of the populace, but also a number of poor wretches accused of practising the art-magic, and making incantations against his life. Witchcraft is not as far as I can learn necessarily penal in these countries. The Mussulman of the present day, like the Christian of a hundred years ago, believes in its existence. The science is divided into two classes, the lawful and the unlawful. The former comprises all incantations performed in the Name of God; the invocation of devils or Jin, that is of unbelieving Jin, being the distinctive feature of the unlawful. In Soudan good old European habits,—how imported, Heaven knows!

still prevail. Churshid Pasha, the then Governor-General, within the last few years condemned three reputed *warlocks* to the stake, and superintended the execution of his sentence with all the gusto of a Spanish inquisitor. His Highness, the present Viceroy, is in this as whimsical as in most other points. He keeps four magicians of various descriptions about his own person, heaping favours upon them, and coming to no decision without consulting them, while the obscurer colleagues of these worthies are sometimes sent up to Soudan, sometimes sewn up in a sack and thrown into the Nile.

The arts of divination as practised by Mussulmans, especially the Moghrabin, who are still, as in the Arabian Nights, the great adepts in the secret sciences, are far too numerous to describe. Read over the list which may be found in the Bibliotheca Orientalis, and acknowledge, O candid reader! if you are initiated in these arts—more studied in sober England than most people would believe—that even the scarce old black-letter duodecimos and folios which have cost you so much labour and money to bring together, do not treat of so many branches of the science. I had prepared a list of the mere names of these sciences, including twenty-eight heads, on every one of which a multitude of works exists, but I think it useless to fill up a page

with a mere nomenclature, and it will suffice to say, that of all the twenty-eight branches of the arts of divination of which I have collected the names, the most practical seems to me the *'Ilm ta 'allek el-kalb*, that is, the art of the credulous that one possesses magic.

It is the highest and most useful function of the traveller to observe the manners of the people he visits, all the customs, which a remote antiquity has done so much to be conducive to public

happiness. This is his best claim to the gratitude and affectionate regard of his stay-at-home countrymen. Moved by these considerations I shall conclude this chapter with a trait of Soudan manners. It is a custom from immemorial time religiously observed in the country about Fazoghli, and which is said to be productive of much satisfaction to all the parties concerned. When the people get tired of their king, they neither shoot at him, nor erect barricades. His nearest relations and viziers wait upon him, and in a respectful oration represent the popular feeling to His Majesty, concluding with a request that he will be condescendingly pleased to hang himself. History only relates the story of one king so insensible to the *dulce et decorum* as to hesitate in complying with the prayer of his subjects; but to the honour of the persuasive powers of natural

affection, it is added that he yielded to the joint representations of his mother and his wife. The last king who thus sacrificed himself to his country's good, ceased to live only twenty years ago, and his nephew still reigns in his stead. We read a story like this of the old kings of Thebes, who were in the habit of obeying a similar order of the Gods conveyed through the chief priests, till it occurred to one impious Pharaoh to appease them by the sacrifice of the priests instead of himself. The experiment succeeded in Egypt, but I have no reason to suppose it would be so fortunate in Fazoghli.

## CHAPTER XV.

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Departure from Chartum—Funeral Procession—Chosrew Bey again  
—A Soudan Fantasia—The Governor arrives Drunk—The  
Banks of the Nile—Pass Shendy—Turkish Aggression—A  
Monster—Gluttonous Sheich—Meröe—Storm on the Nile—  
Neglected Agriculture—Berber.

*May 11th.*—It was a beautiful quiet evening when we took our departure from Chartum. The European population and not a few of the natives had gathered on the banks of the Blue River, below the mission garden, to bid us farewell; some of the former, self-exiled, and without a hope of ever returning to civilisation, still felt many a longing to accompany us. We owed to the kindness of one of our friends the advantage of occupying the largest dahabiah on the river; he was about to despatch it to Berber with a cargo of ivory, and was so obliging as to clear out the cabins for our accommodation. There is something very cheering to the heart in the ready friendship which one drops into in these out-of-the-way countries; it is impossible not to feel in some degree moved by the cordial pressure of the many hands extended to take leave of us by

men,—strangers a few days ago, but whom if we ever meet again, we promise ourselves to regard as old friends. Probably few of those we saw will ever return to Europe, but none are willing to believe themselves settled here for life. All look to the distant day when with large fortunes amassed, they may return to their country. Though the profits of the trade here are enormous, the capitals are small, and the expenses of life considerable. Every European who comes among them is received as if of kindred blood, and a ready hospitality is offered to him by all. The polite chill which sobers our impressionability, if I may coin such a word, in our glassy civilisation, thaws most effectually beneath the sun of the sixteenth degree, and I feel almost as if it can never quite reassert its former influence on my organisation. The travel which wears off asperities is not the grand tour extended, though it be to the Bosphorus and the cataracts of the Nile; to enjoy the benefit which our fathers derived from a winter spent in Rome or Naples, we must now push far beyond the capital of art, even beyond the pale of society; we must avoid the beaten road, with its comfortable inns, the crowds of our sight-seeing countrymen, the cheating *valets-de-place* who prey upon them, and the mutual repulsion which the shock of English natures engenders. For good reasons I was

impatience to get to the end of my journey, yet I lingered on the threshold, for I felt that the pleasantest pages in my day-book had been written, and knew that the thousand miles which lay before me, to be passed during the hottest months of the year, promised a most trying experiment.

I was not however to leave Chartum without experiencing one of the trials of African travel. A servant who had followed me for seven years, had accompanied me on all my wanderings, and who till

within the last few months had been a very model of an active, intelligent servant, was brought on board, after we had been delayed waiting for him an hour, furiously drunk. A Greek wine-merchant seeing the state in which he was, had refused to serve him with more wine, and it was with great difficulty, and at the risk which a struggle with a drunken man always implies, that I caught him and disarmed him of the short, broad, poniard of the country, with which he threatened to despatch the object of his wrath. The conduct of a servant, especially in these countries, always affects his master's reputation ; but independently of this, I saw with chagrin the outbreak of a vice which if I had once or twice suspected, I had never before been able to detect, in a servant whose uniform good conduct had inspired me with the utmost confidence. Egypt, and still

more Soudan, are countries fatal to those who once indulge in the beastly gratification of drinking; a man who has once given way to it is incorrigible, for the opportunities of satisfying it are never wanting, and the habit soon grows into an imperious necessity.

At length we got under weigh accompanied by our kind friends M. de Heuglin and Dr. Peney. As we pushed out into the stream, the sun was casting its last broad glare of orange light, through the thick foliage of the mission garden, on the water. Above and below, thick clumps of trees lined the banks of the river on the Chartum side, like dark fringes, from which the white mass of the Pasha's palace stood out with imposing effect. We had dropt down the stream only a few yards when a loud shrill wail saluted our ears. We saw assembled on the bank a large body of women, covered with gold ornaments, but with torn dresses, their faces and breasts besmeared with mud, who stood watching with straining eyes and dark fluttering handkerchiefs, a procession of ten boats which were crossing to the other side, one carrying a bier, the others a long train of male mourners. From time to time the women raised the funeral wail, and long after we had passed out of sight the shrill sounds pursued us. This boat-funeral



resembled the scenes with which I was soon to become familiar, among the paintings of the Egyptian tombs.

The annoyance to which I had been subjected immediately before our departure, prevented me from enjoying, as I should otherwise have done, the sail down the river. We passed the confluence of the two Niles, whose waters roll side by side for miles unmixed. The banks on either hand are flat, and the tongue of land on which Chartum is built, shelving downwards, must be entirely covered during the inundation. We passed many hippopotami which M. de Heuglin saluted with harmless shots, for as we kept the centre of the stream their black masses, rolling among flags or in the shade of the banks, were distinguishable only to a sportsman's eye.

We were to stop at Sururab, a place about six hours below Chartum on the right bank, having been invited by the Sanjac commanding the Bashi-bazouks there, to a *fantasia* in honour of his daughter's betrothal. We took with us a cavass, who had arrived a few hours before our departure with letters from Mr. Plowden, the British Consul at Massawah, announcing his unsuccessful application to the governor of Tacca for the liberation of the Abyssinian Christians, whose capture I have

mentioned, as well as the insulting treatment he had himself been subjected to.\*

The new governor-general of Soudan was expected at Sururab on his way to Chartum, and M. de Heuglin had promised to represent the matter to him. Though Austrian Consul, M. de Heuglin is always ready to take up the complaints of Europeans of every nation, and his energy is such that he does not fail to obtain justice for them. It is thanks to him, that their trade pros-

\* It is right to call public attention to such facts as the following. One of the first acts of Said Pasha's viceroyalty was to recall the governor of Tacca, Chosrew Bey, and to order the immediate restoration to their country of all the Christians who had been kidnapped by his orders. Of these a part only found their way back to their homes, the remainder having, it was said, died on the road. I need scarcely add that those, who thus sunk under their fatigues, were not the old and infirm, but the young boys and girls. The governor at the end of several months arrived at Cairo, and it was at the same time known that he had been obliged to leave about seventy young Abyssinian slaves at Assuan in consequence of orders from the viceroy forbidding for the future all importation of slaves. (This, to Said Pasha's honour it should be said, was one of his first acts, voluntarily determined on without the intervention of any foreign diplomacy.) Chosrew Bey, on his arrival in Cairo, asked for and obtained an order for bringing them into the country, under the pretence that they were his household slaves. They were the victims of the razzia made on the Abyssinian frontiers. It was on the representation of H. M. consul at Massawah that the order for their liberation was given, but the disobedience to it was suffered to pass unnoticed or unpunished, though the fate of the unhappy children who were sold in Cairo into irredeemable apostasy and slavery was made known to H. M. consul-general. I do not blame the viceroy, for I believe that these facts never reached his ears.

pers, that they are themselves protected from the countless annoyances and acts of oppression, which the ingenuity of the almost irresponsible governors is ever ready to heap upon them. There is said to be an Italian consul for Central Africa somewhere in Chartum, though he had not been heard of for a long time, I believe he some day will be here. As a merchant, however, he can do little but bow to the authorities, for his dealings must always

place him very much in their power. English interests in Chartum may be at present insignificant, but they ought surely to be in independent hands; through M. de Heuglin's kindness they are not entirely neglected, but the protection they thus enjoy is a favour, and our own government should provide for them as a right.

We reached Sururab during the night. Early in the morning horses arrived for us from the Sanjac's stables, and we found a large party, including the governor of Chartum and most of the chief functionaries, encamped round the collection of mud huts which forms the Sanjac's dwelling. Most of the villages in this part of the Nile are built a mile or more inland, on the edge of the cultivated ground, which rarely has a greater breadth than this, though irrigation is all that is

required to render the whole district highly fertile.

The *fantasia* was already begun, and during the four days of our stay it was continued with unceasing vigour from night to morn, from morn to dewy eve. Music and dancing by a corps de ballet summoned from Chartum; jereed-playing, in which the Sanjac himself was a conspicuous figure; and backgammon, were the amusements provided to fill up the intervals between the Gargantuan, but quickly despatched meals, which were served at seven in the morning, three in the afternoon, and a little after midnight. Two or three entire sheep, turkeys stuffed out till they looked like ostriches, were the invariable *pièces de résistance*, accompanied by all the twenty or thirty dishes which are indispensable at a Turkish table. Nor were we condemned to drown all these good things in Nile water. The Sanjac's rule was that of the good Doctor of Chinon,

“Remplis ton verre vuide,  
Vuide ton verre plein,  
Je ne puis souffrir dans ta main  
Un verre ni vuide ni plein.”

Cato's virtue often glowed with wine, but here our Turkish friends required the stronger stimulus of araki.

Ar quaffed in small but innumerable glassfuls, far exceeding in number the fifteen drams to which the tch minister, in his sermon against drunkenness, limited the potations of a sober man, assisted the digestion or he jaded appetite. At sunset seats were in the open air, and a *fantasia*, such as described at Chartum, was commenced; at time till midnight the nectar of Scio uninterrupted stream. It was curious to progress of intoxication

among the grave Turks. One dropped asleep, doubled up in the place where he sat, deaf to the noisy vociferations with which another near him was encouraging the dancers, who with cadenced step advanced to each guest in turn, bearing in one hand a plate of olives or of pickles, in the other the bowl of araki. A third, melting under the double influences of the Hebes and their nectar, distilled hot tears to the memory of a wife to whom he had been much attached; tears, which one of the yellow beauties, seated I almost fear on his knee, wiped away as they rolled down his cheeks. This curious specimen of sentimentality I should have passed over unmentioned, did it not afford me an occasion of bearing witness to the sincere and often passionate attachment which not rarely exists between man and wife among the Osmanli. This

gentleman had lost the wife to whom he was thus attached some months previously, and he was so affected by her death that he was long unfit to perform the functions of his office; and unable to persuade himself of its reality, he three times had her tomb opened, a strange and scandalous violation of the secrets of the grave, which greatly shocked the professors of religion in Chartum.

The new governor-general, an arnaout of unrefined manners, only arrived on the evening of the fourth day of our stay in Sururab. He was evidently, in one respect at least, fitted for the country he has been sent to, for he arrived, in the literal sense of the word, roaring drunk. He will, perhaps, enjoy a longer tenure of office than his immediate predecessors, for it is medically certain that a moderate use of spirits is essential to the health of foreigners in Soudan. The natives drink large quantities of a weak beer called *merisah*; and, strange to say, intemperance seems to be here less fatal than an excess of sobriety. Truly we ran no risk of falling into this last error. I heard from the Sanjac that during the five days which the fête lasted, his guests comprising only eight or nine Turks and four Europeans, the consumption of araki amounted to 300 bottles, or nearly forty gallons.

Abd el Kader is the fifth governor-general who has ruled in Soudan during the last three years. Latif Pasha, who had been here some time, was dismissed early in 1852, not on account of the violences of which he had been accused, but for his non-compliance with the orders of the viceroy, and for his disobedience of the laws of humanity, as to those enforced in his dominions. A heavier punishment.

To him succeeded Rastum Pasha, who died in eight months. The next governor, Ismail Pasha, was recalled for misconduct, on the complaint of a European merchant, whose ivory he had confiscated to his own uses; and the fourth, Selim Pasha, after a few months of continued illness lately obtained leave to return to Cairo. The governor-general, though poorly paid, is a very great man in Soudan. His distance from head-quarters gives him almost absolute power. He is addressed as Effendina, the title given to the viceroy in Egypt; and he has many ways of supplying the deficiencies of his salary, besides the large presents which he receives from the sheichs and other great men. It was understood that his "*joyeuse arrivée*" would cost our host about four hundred pounds in presents.

On the fifth morning we took our departure to pursue our journey by river as far as Muheiref, the capital of Berber, by which latter name the town is more generally known. Misr, which means Egypt, is, in like manner, the name applied, in common conversation, to Cairo, and the restriction in the sense only strikes one forcibly on hearing some native, who speaks Italian, say that he is going to leave Egitto to-morrow, when he is only going to his country-house some five miles distant from the capital.

About six miles below Sururab we sailed through a beautiful group of low granite hills; their tops were rounded with the wear of ages, and their bronzed sides threw golden reflections on the green flood, from whose winding bed they rise abruptly. Here and there a clump of tamarisks grows in the sand collected in the hollows of the rocks, their drooping feathery branches overshadowing the slow, but here deep stream, which in its silent tortuous course is often so closed in that it seems like a succession of small mountain lakes. Emerging from these hills, the banks of the river become suddenly quite flat, the stream widens amazingly, surrounding numerous low islands, and we soon reached the first cataract, formed by great boulders of granite, among which the current acquires a slight increase of speed. The Arabs call such places *Shellal*, literally, shoals.



The name of rapids is hardly applicable to any we saw in this part of our journey; that of cataracts is a complete misnomer. Though probably featureless enough in the glare of mid-day, these rocks and sand-banks, some covered with vegetation, as they now stood with the broad shadows and rising, had a wild beauty of their own. On no mark of culture disturbed the lonely, no living creature was to be seen except a sleepy crocodile, which,

alarmed by the noise of the oars or the report of a gun, floundered with heavy splash into the water from some ledge of rock on which it had been dozing; or the long-legged Ibis, of which as the grey evening advanced, numbers were to be seen on the flat shore, stalking gravely through the shallow waters, like phantoms of the past.

At a short distance beyond this cataract the banks of the Nile assume the character which they preserve as far as we traced the Ethiopian River, that is beyond the juncture of the Atbarah. They present generally on both sides a lofty wall, from 16 to 20 feet high, of soft clay; on the west, this is sometimes replaced by flat plains of sand. The gradual operation of the river, eating as it were its way through this tract, is very evident to the eye. The banks are everywhere undermined, and the masses

washed each year into the current must be enormous, and amply sufficient to supply the fertilising slime of the Egyptian Nile, and the materials which have formed and are daily adding to the delta. The Blue Nile which, at least in the lower part of its course, has a similar character, no doubt brings down its contingent. The White River contributes salts of lime that probably add to the fertilising quality of the rich loam with which the united stream at its greatest height is loaded. Both on this side and on the other bounded by the Atbarah, the island of Meröe presents a uniform character, its surface is formed by an immensely thick layer of alluvial soil, which only requires irrigation in order to yield larger crops of every valuable production of a warm climate, than the whole of Egypt can supply. The two rivers seem intended to feed a net-work of canals, which would transform the desert into a paradise; but for such an end capital, industry, and intelligence are all wanting. Cotton, sugar, wheat and indigo may all be successfully cultivated here, especially the first and last, which grow wild. The regularity of the climate seems to promise a certainty of unfailing crops of these articles, and to render this the most favourable country in the world for their production. To give an idea of the fertility of the soil, and the stimulating nature of the atmo-

sphere, I may mention that in the small garden patches at Chartum four crops of wheat are often grown in one year.

Every night our boat was moored alongside of a village, the usual style of Nile navigation. There is however little to tell of the voyage, for though the boat was always deserted by the crew as soon as they had secured it to the bank, I was never tempted to follow them ashore, either by the promise of *fantasias*, of which I had seen more than enough, or from the inducements which the beershops in all the villages of this district could afford. I had intended to visit Shendy, almost entirely ruined by the Defterdar thirty-five years ago in revenge for Ismail Pasha's murder, but we arrived there early in the morning, and the Reis, calling the place Abu Shenad, I was too sleepy to recognise the name in its new dress, and we made him move on. After all there is I believe nothing to be seen worth going on shore for, but one immensely fat old lady, weighing several hundred-weight, the greatest woman in the world, and called the Mother of a Thousand; it was not, indeed, by giving this number of sons to her country that she had merited the homage of a Napoleon, but from the number of gold ounce rings with which she appeased the fury of the Defterdar. Every one has read of the richly merited fate of

Ismail Pasha, and of the sanguinary blood-bath by which it was avenged. No one who has seen a Turk speak to an Arab can doubt that the Pasha brought his fate upon his own head, by his insolence as well as by the extent of his exactions. Although he may not have been worse than other members of his family, it cannot be questioned that his death was the just punishment of the wanton aggression of the Egyptian Viceroy on a peaceful population. He had not even the favourite excuse that barbarians always sooner or later must be subjected to their more civilised neighbours; for (apart from the question whether Egypt could be said to be more civilised, though better armed, than Soudan in the beginning of this century), these nations forming a federation of small states, governed by kings, were separated from Egypt by cataracts and deserts, and never had given the smallest occasion for complaints. This subjection, unjust in its principle, may not in the end be disadvantageous to this country, and it affords a curious historical parallel.

In all the changes which it has seen, no country in the world presents, perhaps, so many instances of recurring events in its history as Egypt. The first warlike expedition of the Egyptians into Ethiopia was occasioned by the desertion of the soldiers of

Psamettichus, who took refuge in the south, whither he pursued them. After the massacre of the Mamlukes, the survivors, with all the treasure they could collect, retreated upon Dongola, with the intention of founding a new dynasty in countries which had been hitherto unoccupied. Here they do not seem to have met any more powerful nation, their popular, their haughty spirit disdaining to fight the natives whom they regarded as inferior. While the first tribe with whom they came in contact were the Sheikieh, a race of men not less remarkable for their dark beauty than for their brilliant courage. But Mehemet Ali did not allow time for the struggle which had already commenced between the Mamlukes and the Sheikieh to come to a decisive result: he dreaded the neighbourhood of men whom he had so deeply injured, and so soon as he had completed the destruction of the Wahabi power in Arabia, he prepared to pursue the Mamlukes into the heart of Africa. Unable to oppose his power, many escaped through the desert into Darfour, but they had set in motion an energy which could only be quelled by conquest. The rude but free populations of Soudan were unable to defend against cannon and fire-arms, of whose use they were ignorant, the rich country which they possessed; and after a bloody battle at Korti, in which the Sheikieh performed prodigies of

unavailing valour, the Egyptian troops had to contend only with scarcity and sickness. Mehemet Ali thus added to his dominions a country far more extensive than Egypt, and with as large a population ; but the increase of strength which it has brought him and his heirs is at most insignificant. In their eagerness to discover mines of the precious metals, or of gems, they have neglected to develop the enormous capabilities of a country, whose fertile soil requires only to be watered from the rivers which intersect it, to yield whatever crops the cultivator could desire.

But I must not part with the Defterdar so easily. His name is still a word of fear in these countries, his savage cruelties, which have been related in every detail, and, probably, with many embellishments, were a disgrace even to barbarism, and the cup of coffee administered by the hands of his minion, the present viceroy (Abbas Pasha), was a deserved but too tardy fate. Yet this monster was not without a greater share of scientific culture than was usual among Turks in his time, nor inaccessible to generous impulses ; some of his acts were marked by a sort of rude sense of justice. There is a village sheich still alive in Kordofan, who can bear witness to the Defterdar's application of a sort of *Lex talionis*. This sheich had made a

bargain to keep his excellency's dromedaries for a certain monthly sum, and he fancied he had discovered an economical way of keeping them in good condition by turning them into the durrah fields of the peasants, not that complaints of trespasses come. Yesterday's camels would for a moment. In this he showed a clever appreciation of the selfish character, but like many clever men, he realised too rapidly and made no account of exceptional cases. He soon

discovered that he had fallen upon one. The fellahs, not yet broken in to the habits of Egyptian servility, lost patience as they saw their growing crops devoured, and in a body waited upon the dreaded generalissimo. He immediately assembled his divan, and summoned the sheich to answer the people's charges. Of course he pleaded his perfect innocence, throwing any blame there might be on his excellency's camels, which he acknowledged had shown a wayward taste for growing corn, a taste natural in the cattle of so exalted a personage, and which he, a poor village sheich, could not of course venture to control. After listening with exemplary patience to the defence, and calling on the people for a reply, the Defterdar deliberated with his counsel and pronounced judgment. The camels were found guilty of eating what in no way belonged to them,

but they, being endowed with no sense of discrimination, could not be held answerable for their misdoings, while the sheich, who was receiving money for their entertainment, was evidently for the time *in loco parentis*, or next friend, and as such responsible for their good conduct. He, therefore, must be considered as having eaten the crops, for, *quod fecit per alium, fecit per se*. On him, therefore, the punishment of so great an enormity must be inflicted, and none could be more appropriate to the justice of the case than the immediate extraction of all his teeth, that he who had thus (by deputy) devoured the goods of the poor, should for the remainder of his life be deprived of the power of masticating even his own. No more complaints were made of the illegal appetites of the camels, and there being no philanthropic dentists in Soudan to supply sets of *osanore* teeth better than Dame Nature's, the sheich has ever since subsisted on a spoon-meat diet.

Another and more pleasing story of the Defterdar has its scene at Shendy. M. Thibault, a merchant long established in this country, had had some transactions with a Turkish colonel, who, in settling his account, insisted upon paying him in dollars at the rate of twenty piastres each, their current value being only seventeen. M. Thibault



refused to accept this arrangement, on which he loaded him with abuse, calling him a Giaour and threatening to beat him. M. Thibault went straight to the Defterdar, told him the story, and the colonel was at once called up. By the contraction of the general's eyebrows, the ominous twitching of the corner of his mouth, it was evident to those who knew him that an instant execution would follow, when M. Thibault, throwing himself at his feet, begged the man's life, saying, that he would rather submit to the loss than have to accuse himself of a fellow creature's death. The Defterdar turned to the culprit, "See you, hound, the man whom you call a Giaour begs for your life, and by God, and by God, and by God, had he not done so, this instant you had died. Go, kiss his feet, and pay what is due to him!" Kiss his feet! What a terrible humiliation for a Turk!

The rest of the journey was very quickly performed. We stopped only to visit the groups of sandstone pyramids which mark the site of the ancient capital of Meröe. The first impression they produce is disappointment at the extreme ugliness of their outline; a second glance compelled me to laugh as I remembered the quaint destination invented for them by a French savant, whose name engraved in letters gigantic as Moses and

Co's, but unfortunately more enduring, illustrates most of the monuments further down. He gravely asserts, that these solid lumps were the country-houses of the ancient inhabitants, a sort of Æthiopian St. Cloud. M. Lepsius has demonstrated the comparatively recent date of their erection, and after seeing them it seems strange how a high antiquity could ever have been assigned to them; as the small size of the stones with which they are built is the unerring indication of a late age, even if the meagreness of their outline were not a proof that they are the work of a period of decay. They are evidently a poor imitation of a style of building whose first principles were not understood. The Pyramids of Egypt are representative of an idea, that of duration, their form being that which presents the most stable equilibrium in geometry. Those of Meröe, with sides twice as high as their base is broad, forbid the idea that any principle (certainly not that of beauty) presided over their construction; and their bulging sides betray an ignorant adaptation of the law of perspective applied to the later obelisks, and to the columns in Greek architecture, but which here only gives them the effect of falling in, like an ill-boiled pudding.

But Meröe, whose latest monuments we here do

not admire, is one of the most interesting points in ancient geography; it is the cradle of one of the most ancient religions, of the earliest civilisation, in the world, older than Sinai or Mecca, than Tyre and Athens. Hence the worship of Ammon was imported into Egypt, though, perhaps, it was not indigenous here, but brought from Abyssinia or rather India, and the ship-shrine of the God seems to favour this idea. But there is no reason to suppose that at any time Merœ rivalled the

splendour of Thebes. It is intelligible, that the small beginnings of the trading community (for Ammon was the god of commerce, and his priests were merchants), should expand in the valley of the Nile, in proportion as they had now seated themselves on one of the great natural highways. Hence they spread their establishments, of which the Ammonium in the Oasis was one of the most considerable, to the shores of the Atlantic and into Greece. The Argonautic expedition in search of the golden fleece was probably connected with the mercantile worship of Ammon. Thebes became a mighty state, of which its merchant-priests were long the princes, and even after they had submitted to the rule of a sovereign, they retained a large portion of their power and of their wealth. Their intercourse with the parent state continued up to

late times frequent, and it is natural that the arts of the more prosperous colony should react upon the more ancient foundation. But it was probably long before the arts of Egypt found imitators among a people so little given to their cultivation as the *Æthiopians* seem to have been. In the time of Herodotus they were evidently hardly more refined than at the present day, and yet their connection with Egypt was even then of the remotest antiquity. The smaller temple of Karnak is built with the materials of an earlier one; and we have no means of conjecturing at what date the latter had succeeded to the tent or tabernacle, which was probably the first depository of the Ark. The site of Meröe is therefore venerable, though its pyramids be young and ugly, and their hieroglyphics unmeaning as those on the obelisks to the memory of the leather-merchant and the tape-seller in Prince T.'s garden. England owes her earliest traditions of commerce, and Greece her letters, to the oracle of the Ram-headed god.

The rainy season extending rather more than a degree north of Chartum, begins about the end of May, and we were as fortunate as men who get a severe drenching can esteem themselves, in being overtaken in two places by specimens of the storms which swell the Nile. One day about three, when

the sun was bright but not a breath of air was stirring, there suddenly came a great change over the atmosphere. A dark cloud, a hand's breadth, was visible on the horizon in the S.W., announcing the approach of the storm; it grew broader and broader till it overspread the whole sky, but still no breath of wind was perceptible. Of a sudden was seen a cloud of sand driven like smoke along the earth with great velocity, loud thunderclaps rolled through the air in quick succession. The dust storm, with a sound of mighty rushing, flew past us, peppering through the trees like hail, and covering everything with fine sand; it was immediately followed by heavy rain, which, from the violence of the wind, swept like a thick vapour over the troubled surface of the water. This lasted for more than an hour, during which time an almost total darkness covered the earth, as if there had been an eclipse. Our boat, against whose sides the river lashed in high waves, lay in some degree protected from the violence of the hurricane under the lea of the bank, to which we had run, and beneath whose overhanging sides our boatmen sought refuge, each sitting naked on his clothes to keep them dry. The shrivelled planks of our dahabiah were not proof against such a deluge, but for once it was worth while being exposed to the discomfort, for the

sake of beholding a tropical rain. The storm was succeeded by perfect stillness, the sun re-appeared in his accustomed splendour, and in half an hour not a cloud was to be seen in any part of the sky.

The banks of the Nile between Chartum and Berber are little cultivated, the water-wheels for irrigation are rare, and the people principally subsist on the abundant crops which they can raise without labour, by sowing after the rains. This neglect of the immense natural resources of the country is in some degree attributable to the slothful character of its black inhabitants, but still more to the exactions of the government which paralyse industry, and are gradually causing an emigration of the people southwards. The population of the whole of Soudan from Assouan up to Sennaar is calculated at four millions of souls, considerably more than that of the Pashalic of Egypt, but the revenue which the country yields, notwithstanding the increased taxation, no longer covers the outlay ; or more properly, in accordance with the principles of political economy, true even in a barbarous country, the increased taxation is the direct cause of the diminished revenue. The income is at present only 36,000 purses, and the daily increasing expenses already exceed this sum ; while twelve

years ago a surplus revenue of 14,000 ounces in gold rings was annually sent to Cairo. The nominal taxation is not excessive, but the real burthens on the land greatly exceed this. The Kebabish Arabs who inhabit the country to the west of Dongola, offered two years ago to pay one dollar a head on their camels in lieu of all description of impost, the nominal tax being only six piastres, and their offer was rejected. In the province of Dongola there were formerly 5500 *sakiahs*, waterworks for irrigation, now there are not 2000. The tax upon each of these is nominally 404 piastres, but in addition the government requires the proprietor to furnish a slave annually for each *sakiah*, allowing him however the price of the slave according to a certain tarif. The slave costs on an average in the market 1200 piastres; the government price is 600, there is thus a tax on each waterwork of 1004 piastres. In the large island of Argo, where 800 *sakiahs* were once established, there are not ten at the present moment. In the same way the tax on the date-trees nominally three piastres each, is in fact nearly a dollar, and in consequence numbers are annually cut down. One would almost think that the ruin of this magnificent country was the object of its rulers, and I was struck with a remark made to me by Abderrahman Bey, one of the wildest of Egyptian statesmen, whom

I saw at Chartum on his way to the mines: "If," said he, "cultivation were greatly increased, it would soon be followed by an increase of population and of knowledge, and in this case it would be impossible for Egypt to keep the country in subjection." He had long been at the head of Mohammed Ali's agricultural administration, and was thus well acquainted with the varieties of Egyptian soil and produce, and never ceased exclaiming on the wonderful capabilities of this country, which he had never seen till now, when he passed through it as a prisoner, to die of poison or fatigue in a few weeks.

At Berber, where we were hospitably received in the house of M. Lafargue, whom I have mentioned in connection with the White Nile, we spent three days occupied with the preparations for resuming our land journey through the desert to rejoin the Nile at Korosko. Berber itself, or rather Muheiref, is built on a barren soil, surrounded on every side by desert. Lying as it does on the Nile, little labour would be required to encircle it with gardens. The markets are miserably furnished, and I have never seen a place which had so few attractions, though from its position, at the centre of the caravan roads from Egypt to Chartum and Sawakin, it ought to be a place of great prosperity.



## CHAPTER XVI.

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Supply of Water—Departure—Intense dry Heat—Skeletons of Camels—State Prisoners—Marattah—Again meet the Nile—Canalisation of the Desert—Abbas Pasha—His Avarice—An Apologue—Sea Canal.

*May 22nd.*—Our bargain was soon made with the Sheich of the Korosko road, government having fixed a tarif for the camels which he furnished ; and late on the afternoon of the fifth day after our arrival we began our journey. We went very slowly as far as Abu Hamed, the place at which the road turns off from the Nile, to avoid fatiguing ourselves and our camels, as once in the desert we should have no choice but to hurry on at the bidding of the guides, who exercise their functions most despotically. Near Geygeh, ten hours from Abu Hamed, we passed the simple mound of earth, which marks the burial-place of an Englishman who died here a few years ago, fortunate in being surrounded on his desert death-bed by his family. Two days were passed at Abu Hamed, in the passage of the desert, and in unwisely resisting the attempts of the camel-

men to increase the number of our camels. It was a small, and as experience proved a bad economy. The camel cannot carry so heavy a load in the desert, where it only drinks once in four days, as in a road where water is found every day; and some allowance must also be made for the food of the camels and the water of their conductors, though the traveller has nothing to do with them. For six persons we had five camels loaded with water, not an extravagant allowance for ten days; the water of the well, which is found half-way, is unfit even for cooking. Our caravan was in this way somewhat increased, and experience proved that we should have done well to have added at least two more water camels to our train. The loss from dripping and evaporation was such (though the masters exercised every economy, as an example to the native servants,) that our twenty-four water-skins were empty on our arrival at the wells, and there remained only two barrels secured with lock and key, to serve during the remainder of the journey. Our servants were thus reduced to drink the well-water, which had fortunately no evil effect upon them, though it often has, particularly upon those coming from the north. From my experience of frequent journeys in the desert, I should recommend travellers starting from Cairo, to provide

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By no arrangement of mattresses and pillows could I deaden the violence of the pummelling to which I had subjected myself; the only point in which my invention had succeeded being, that I certainly ran no risk of falling out in a fit of drowsiness. One may have slept through a storm and a bombardment, but to do so in a nodding *carmut* is utterly impossible.

Our preparations were at length completed. We had got over the difficulties we had employed ourselves in creating; and one afternoon with a bright sun,—how bright on that sand-plain an English reader can only understand by comparing it to the glow of a glass furnace,—we entered on the long passage which separates Soudan and Æthiopia from Nubia and Egypt. The manner of travelling adopted in the summer season in this desert, against which it is in vain to protest, as one is entirely under the command of the guides, is what renders it fatiguing, rather than the length of the journey. We were once seventeen hours and a half in the twenty-four in the saddle; and the general rate of travelling was sixteen hours a day. The Ababdeh camels are very quick, and the camel-men the most alert I have ever met with. They usually started about two or three in the afternoon, and journeyed till sunset, when a halt of half an hour was made

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more independent, carrying only a bag of biscuits and a skin of water like the camel-men ; but as this is quite unnecessary, there being no difficulty in enjoying a reasonable amount of comfort, they have no right to tell us of their self-imposed privations. To give an idea of the heat it is not enough to say that the thermometer was at  $110^{\circ}$  every day from 12 to 4. This is only to say that it was four or five degrees higher than we have had it every day for the last three months. The dry heat was such that it was impossible to write two words consecutively without re-dipping the pen into the ink-bottle ; my india-rubber bath and sponge-bags, though protected from the action of the sun, were rendered useless ; but what will give a better idea of the temperature as judged not by the thermometer, but by sensation is, that when at night the thermometer fell to  $84^{\circ}$  the body felt the change so intensely, that a Scotch plaid was a welcome covering on camel-back, and in the tent a woollen blanket or quilt was absolutely necessary ; in the hot hours of the day, water cooled down to  $75^{\circ}$  chilled the teeth as if iced.

The greatest security from violence and pilfering exists in this desert, as the sheich of the road appointed by government is responsible for everything. We saw in many places loads of gum and other merchandise lying by the side of the road,

left there by the death of the camels which had carried them, and to be brought on by another caravan. We were told of a Frank merchant who was thus obliged to abandon part of his cargo of araki about a year ago. A party of Turkish officers came up to the place before it had been removed; and, *diabolo suadente*, the spirit prompting them, they opened a case, notwithstanding the objurgations of their guides and extracted four bottles. On the arrival of the party at Berber, information was at once given to the sheich, who carried his complaint to the governor. The governor summoned the officers, and requesting the proprietor to attend, ordered them to arrange with him for the price of his araki, of whose felonious appropriation he now heard for the first time. Threatened with being prevented from joining their regiment, and that a report of the robbery would be forwarded to Char-tum, they were fain to pay a hundred piastres a piece for the bottles they had regaled themselves with; the proprietor probably wished that they had consumed his whole cargo.

The first three days of our journey we travelled over a flat expanse of sand, unmarked by anything but the bleached skeletons of camels which had fallen exhausted on their long march. The line of road is dotted with these *memento mori*, often in long,

uninterrupted succession; but never so far apart that from one several others cannot be seen. One of my camels fell the fifth day of the journey, and the guide who had remained to bring it on left it lying on the sand. It was with difficulty that I persuaded him to commission an Arab belonging to a caravan we met an hour or two afterwards, to kill it in passing. Such an act of humanity to a dying beast, saving it the pangs of a slow death by hunger and thirst, had not entered into an Arab's calculations. My old friends in the Libyan desert who slaughter and eat the exhausted camel are practically more humane\*. It seems difficult to imagine that one can lose oneself in a road so clearly marked out, yet such things do occasionally occur, and then the danger is very great, as the dryness of the air produces a degree of thirst, which causes death in an incredibly short time. A few days before our start a merchant of Assuan thus perished. When the caravan he was with, resumed the journey during the night, before its arrival at Abu Hamed he stayed behind to obtain another

\* The Arabs are actuated neither by feelings of humanity nor of cruelty in leaving the fallen camels to their fate in the desert. They do not kill it if it belongs to themselves, for they say, who knows but that God will restore it? If it belongs to any one else, they take good care not to do so; for he would then, according to the law, have a right to sue them for compensation.



hour's sleep. He lost his way but was not missed till next morning. A search immediately commenced, but it was only on the following night that having tracked his footsteps in the sand, he was found seated under a tree ; he had died of thirst in sight of the broad-flowing Nile.

On the fourth morning early we saw before us the low granite hills among which lie the Marattah wells, the resting-place of the caravans between Abu Hamed and Korosko, and by ten o'clock we had pitched our tents in the sandy, treeless, shadowless hollow which they occupy. Nothing could be more melancholy than this basin whose sides reflected the burning sun-rays, its hot sand filthy with the excrements of thousands of caravans, and even its wells, mere holes scraped in the centre of the hollow, containing a puddle-like water, added an appearance of ruin to the desolation of the scene. The water when fresh-drawn from the wells is very hard, feeling to the skin in washing something like sand, but after it has been boiled or has stood a day in the water-skins it acquires a strong bitter taste from the large quantity of (sulphate of magnesia ?) which it contains.

We were not alone at the wells. Besides the Arab in charge of the dromedaries of the post, who came to levy his tribute—a small bowl of durrah given him by each camel-man for keeping the wells

clear—there was a small party of soldiers with their officer who were returning to Cairo from Chartum; whither they had been in charge of a large quantity of gunpowder, which the viceroy has prudently sent up there to be out of the way of the war. A large group was formed by a party of twenty sheichs of the towns in the Saïd, travelling each under charge of a cavass to the fatal mines of Keizan, of which I have already spoken. They left before we did, and it was a piteous sight to see these men, their hands fastened between two logs of wood rivetted together, and many of them with chains on their legs, as one after another they were lifted upon the camels which carried them. Two had already died with fatigue on the road, the rest seemed to bear up wonderfully; perhaps they had a little money with which to procure a few comforts beyond the meagre rations afforded by government; the greater number had profited by their stay in Assuan to buy purple and yellow leaf'd parasols, which after they were mounted were put into their hands by their guards, and by their gay appearance gave an air of fête to the party, strangely in contrast with the misery of their lot. For the last four years, one after another, long trains of prisoners have been thus sent across the desert—for them the gates of hell. Among them the once powerful and wealthy

sheichs of the Arab tribes, the mayors of the towns and, to strike terror into the lowest classes as well as to brand with greater infamy the others, a selection from the very dregs of the people is joined with them. At Cairo I imagined that the cost of sending prisoners a distance, a journey of four or five months, prevent any one being exposed to this punishment but men whose personal importance would make their absence worth the cost of transportation. I found, however, an opportunity of correcting this impression. All the vice-roy's prisoners have not steamers at their disposition, nor are they all honoured with so large a body-guard. On the fourth day after our departure from Berber, we had met a caravan of twenty-two prisoners, men judging from their appearance of the lowest rank of Fellahs, and their transportation was effected on so economical a scale, that I calculated it would not cost from more than 150 piastres a head. The greater part were mounted on dromedaries, three or four were on foot, all had their hands fastened in wooden stocks, some had their feet in chains. A single cavass with two Arab camel-men were the only guard in charge of these twenty-two men, who, he told me, were "rebels" from Sharkieh. They had already been two months and nine days on their journey.

We rested twenty-four hours at Marattah, a welcome respite from the fatigues of the preceding days, though our tents, not calculated for such a journey, were insufferably hot. The camels and our water-skins having been replenished at the well we continued our journey, though had I known what I learned on my arrival at Assuan, that there is a large basin of sweet water on a hill lying half a day's journey to the left of Marattah, I should probably for the sake of the servants who were now reduced to drink its bitter waters, have insisted on calling at this place on our route. A settlement of the Bishari is formed round the basin, whose neighbourhood abounds in trees and herbage for cattle. The caravans rarely take this road, which is unknown to the greater number of passengers, on account of the extra fatigue the camels are exposed to, in leaving the valley which the common road follows.

Three days and nights were occupied in reaching Korosko, but this part of the journey, though fatiguing enough, from the continued privation of sleep, was through a more interesting country. Instead of the boundless flat through which we had travelled from Abu Hamed to Marattah, we now followed a road which, though still nearly flat, is on either side marked by a succession of low hills of schist, whose black jagged lamina thrust

themselves through the sand. These are followed by more open spaces, dotted with rocks of coarse sand, some of whose sides were brightly painted with variegated strata, and afforded under their overhanging slabs a grateful refuge for the midday repose. We were fortunate, considering the season of the year, in encountering no excessive heat; our faces were turned towards the north, whence a slight breeze fanned us refreshingly, but a native merchant who made the passage only a few days before us, described to me what his caravan had suffered as painful beyond imagination. He lost ten camels belonging to his caravan, their loads were the packages which we had remarked lying abandoned in the sand. One day during the midday rest, soon after passing the wells, his secretary, a Copt, who in the agonies of thirst had drunk large quantities of water, was struck down by the heat and died on the spot. He was immediately buried where he fell, and the rest of the party loading in all haste their camels, proceeded at once on the road notwithstanding the midday sun, and, fortunately, after a couple of hours, reaching a slight elevation, where a refreshing wind came to their relief, they were saved. It was in the first gorge after leaving the wells that the poor Copt died. The place had a most sinister aspect with

its black rocks, more lugubriously black from the contrast of the bright orange sand piled up round their bases, the carcasses of camels and cattle which strewed the pass between them, and the large vultures \* which, gorged with their recent feast, sat immoveable on the rock-crests, looking down upon us as we passed. I knew nothing at the time of the melancholy incident of which it had been so lately the scene, but now the details of this charnel-house are still fresh before me, and the remembrance of it makes me shudder involuntarily.

Approaching Korosko the landscape changes considerably. Here and there a clump of palm-trees enlivens the desert; two or three rather steep gorges are descended in succession, till at last between the lofty rocks, at whose amphitheatrical base lies Korosko, we again caught a glimpse of the languid Nile, gliding sluggishly through its half-empty bed. With joy I hailed the eye-refreshing verdure, and hurrying my dromedary, which also panted for the running waters, I was not the last to dismount at the "divan," or rather *shanty*, provided on the banks of the river for the reception of the traveller. A carpet and mattress were speedily spread on the mud bank, which runs round the sides of the chamber, the fourth being opened to the river.

\* *Otogyps Auricularis*

Throwing myself upon them I tried in vain to sleep. For six nights out of seven I had only had two hours of sleep, and though every time we stopped, I lay myself out like our Arabs with the firm resolution of sleeping like them, I was never able to do so; notwithstanding which, probably owing to the exciting nature of the desert air, I never once felt drowsy on camel-back. Being an invalid or perhaps a hypochondriac, I never violate my habits without a cruel pang of conscience; this preternatural wakefulness alarmed me, I persuaded myself that Dame Nature would revenge herself upon me, for being cheated out of six of the eight hours of sleep I usually allow her, and by degrees a morbid dread of approaching illness had grown upon me. On arriving, my first and only thought was therefore to sleep; but no bad consequences followed my ill success, and the next morning I awoke under the awning of the open boat on which we were floating down to Assuan, not racked as I had expected by African fever, but as fresh and well as if I were only just beginning the long journey I have here described.

In crossing the desert of Korosko I had paid particular attention to the formation of the country, as connected with an idea I had long entertained of the practicability of cutting a canal through it.

I am persuaded that it is not only possible, but that it would be an enormously remunerative enterprise. The succession of rapids between Abu Hamed and Wâdy Halfa render the navigation of the Nile in this part of its course at all times dangerous, and often impossible. This canal would unite Soudan to Egypt, besides creating in its passage through the desert a broad belt of fertile land, sufficient to pay within ten years the cost of its formation. The distance is considerable, about 240 miles, but few engineering difficulties oppose the undertaking. The rise to the centre of the peninsula is very slight, valleys present themselves through which the canal could be carried, and I have understood that by carrying the mouth to a point about thirty miles above Korosko, the low hills which rise there would be avoided.

From Korosko downwards the Nile is well known; I need not therefore delay the reader by any description of it.

I arrived alone in Cairo towards the end of July, and found the city in a state of unusual excitement. There were strange news, matter for great rejoicing, yet men only spoke of it in a whisper. Three days before my return Abbas Pasha had expired; whether struck by the arm of God or of man, was still uncertain. But hope sat upon every



face, and many dry eyes had followed him to the grave.

For many months I had felt convinced from all I had heard of Abbas Pasha, that he was mad ; if not mad, for the credit of humanity he ought at least to have been held so. In the last months of his life, his paroxysms of fury had grown so frequent and so violent, that even those, who were least inclined to believe in his madness, began to hint, that he could not be allowed much longer to continue his career of tyranny. In guaranteeing the possession of Egypt to the family of Mohammed Ali, the great Powers rewarded the vigorous administration of the founder and of his eldest son. They became morally responsible for the good conduct of the viceroy, at least they did not engage themselves to uphold a Domitian or a Heliogabalus.

Abbas Pasha's character was little understood ; his talents were much underrated, his vices were wilfully or unintentionally overlooked, and the unrelenting cruelties, by which he sought to forward them were, officially at least, glozed over. Personally timid to excess, he shrunk from no act of secret violence, but he preferred to compass his ends by the silent persuasions of gold, or the slower tortures of legal forms. Suspicious to excess, he surrounded not only the members of his grand-

father's and uncle's family, the foreign representatives, the wealthy proprietors and merchants, with spies, but even his son and mother were subjected to their degrading vigilance. As a financial administrator he displayed very remarkable talents, which he turned to account by extracting from Egypt a revenue far exceeding any his grandfather had been able to raise. He was grasping, but not penurious; he exacted without mercy the uttermost farthing, and he squandered without regret his enormous revenues for the gratification of a caprice, or the attainment of an aim. He was said to spend 250,000*l.* a year in bribery at Constantinople, and the Sultan's mother was known to be one of the largest recipients. He was not destitute of a sort of generosity, the great virtue of the old Turk. His favourites profited largely by his bounty, but so little did he inspire attachment, or so ill had he chosen them, that after his death they were among the first to denounce his cruelties, and the most eager to offer their services to his successor. Their abject meanness now, could only be paralleled by their past insolence.

Of all his creatures, his last Prime Minister alone continued doggedly faithful to his master, dying a few days after him of fright or sorrow, when he saw the failure of an attempt which he had made

with some audacity to change the succession. This had been Abbas Pasha's constant aim; for this he had lavished such enormous sums at Constantinople; to obtain the concurrence of the Foreign Consuls-General, he was [REDACTED] make every sacrifice which might conciliate [REDACTED] them. To forestall the opposition of the [REDACTED] of the country, he condemned them to [REDACTED] ng death of the mines, and he spared no means to effect the utter ruin of the collateral branches of his family, in the hope of obtaining through their necessities the renunciation of their rights. Had he lived the forty years longer promised him by his astrologers, he would probably have succeeded in his designs. He left to his son a colossal fortune, which, as the fruits of a six year's reign, deserves to be cited. His freehold property comprises 80,000 feddans of the finest land in Egypt, and he holds 54,000 more, farmed at a nominal rent from the Government. It is acknowledged that, at his death, his private treasury contained 600,000*l.* in gold; and the real amount is generally believed to have been nearly five times this sum. The public treasury was empty. To these must be added his many palaces containing furniture and jewels of immense value and magnificence. The cooking utensils used for his own table were of gold. At the time of his death there were forty-three public

works in progress ; of these two, the railway from Alexandria and the Barrage were public works in the usual sense of the word ; the rest were palaces or dependencies of palaces for the Pasha's private use. Not only was the public treasury empty, but the revenue also had been anticipated for the next three months ! The pay of all the employés was in arrear ; old claims were still in litigation, and many new debts were unliquidated.

The position of Said Pasha, the present Viceroy, is a difficult one, and time must be allowed him to prove whether he has the good sense and talents necessary to conduct himself in it with benefit to his country. As a young man he displayed a remarkably free and generous disposition. He had the advantage of a semi-European education, and he showed, for an Oriental Prince, considerable readiness to listen to advice. But the antecedents of a despot are rarely to be trusted as indications of what his conduct will be on the throne ; and it is too soon to predict for him a rule as brilliant and as useful as his father's, though he will probably avoid the most glaring faults of his predecessor. The readiness with which his old friends or flatterers turned their backs upon him in the time of Abbas Pasha, the bad opinion he has had too good reasons to form of the great mass of the Franks with whom

he has been in contact, have destroyed his confidence either in Turk or Christian. His great principle of action seems now to be the determination not to be taken in. He regards everyone with suspicion, believing that all who touch him are prepared to cheat him if they can. He proceeds with all the over-caution which this idea suggests. He will probably be as frequently and as severely deceived as any of his predecessors.

There was once—as an Armenian lady told us—a wild youth, who being left his own master at an early age, spent his time in making love to his neighbours' wives. When, as was unhappily too often the case, successful in his suit, he never failed to inquire how the frail one had contrived to escape her husband's vigilance. He kept a book in which he noted down her name and the means she had employed to visit him, and at the end of a few years his register contained more than a thousand artifices invented to baffle the guardians of the Harem. He now thought that he had acquired a fund of knowledge which would justify his risking a matrimonial alliance. He married a youthful and ingenuous bride, and now all his time and energies were devoted to guarding against the misfortune, which he had thought so insignificant or amusing when it befel others. If his wife expressed a wish to visit her

mother or her aunt, a reference to his register showed him the danger of compliance. The desire to go a-shopping was not less suspicious; he, therefore, anticipated every want or caprice which could justify it. He treated her with all kindness, but he kept her a prisoner; he bestowed upon her every mark of jealous affection, but he showed her no confidence. His suspicion suggested to the lady thoughts which with fair treatment would never have occurred to her; he had taught her that there was a forbidden fruit to long for, and being a daughter of Eve nothing but its attainment would satisfy her.

"Oh! in certe cose poi, quando ha promesso  
E troppo puntuale il gentil sesso!"

In a neighbouring house lived a youth as anxious to prove himself amiable, as her husband had been a few years ago; from the window acquaintance was soon made by signs, and, with the impetuosity of the East, a meeting was promised. One morning the fair captive asked leave to go to the bath. This could not be refused, and seemed to offer no cause of alarm to her husband, who determined to accompany her himself to the door, and to escort her home again. As they walked along the lady's foot slipped in passing a house before which a quantity of soap-suds had just been thrown out, and falling to the ground

she soiled her *habarah* and *sablah* with mud. What was she to do? She told her husband to ask the porter of the house for a little water to remove the dirt, and he very politely pointed out the door of the Harem, requesting that the lady would allow some of the slaves to repair the disorder of her dress. Her husband waited patiently during the half hour she was obliged to wait. She had of course been obliged to drink, and to smoke a pipe with the lady of the house. They then proceeded to the bath and her husband took up his station at the café opposite, waiting to reconduct her home. In the evening, after supper, as they were sitting lovingly together, smoking the pipe of domestic happiness, she turned to him and said: "By the way, my soul, you may as well look and see if soap-suds are entered in your register; if not, put them down!"

It may be thus with Said Pasha. He may escape being taken in by the thousand tricks he has noted down, but he will not the less, or rather he will only the more surely, fall into the toils prepared for him by some crafty slave or more cunning Frank. His suspicious temper may render neither himself nor his people unhappy; it may not engender brooding cruelty, but it will not perhaps save him from many a false step in policy.

The increasing importance of Egypt as the high-

way of Asiatic commerce renders its condition both politically and commercially interesting to Europe. On the prudence and conduct of the present Viceroy, the stability of his dynasty will probably depend. He has to satisfy the claims of humanity and the commercial requirements of Europe, as well as to resist the encroachments of the Porte, ever anxious to recover dominions, where its feeble sway would be the greatest curse.

It requires constant vigilance to preserve from depredations the trees of an orchard through which there is a right of way between our neighbours' fields. Said Pasha's late grant of land for a sea-canal between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, seems to prove that he finds one road through his garden too little to occupy his energies. Or does he regard it as a means of insuring his independence by giving everyone a right to interfere with him? or, finally, has he already stumbled on the soap-suds?



## ENVOI.

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IN looking over these pages, though I venture to offer them to the public, I am painfully sensible how far they are from conveying the ideas I could have wished. They make no pretence to rank as contributions to science, and I feel that they do not present the picture of Oriental life I could have desired to draw. I have purposely refrained from troubling my readers with references to some disagreeable accompaniments of my journey which could not interest him. To travel comfortably one must travel alone, or with congenial companions. The latter are rarely found. But though the enjoyment of travel in new countries may thus be diminished, it is not destroyed, and I look back to every day of these six months with some feeling of pleasure. Even, *quod fuit durum pati, meminisse dulce est*; and I am sorry not to have rendered more attractive to the reader, passages which if not altogether enjoyable, were full of interest.

To travel in the East, and I presume in any other

country, with fruit, though the fruit we seek be only pleasure, a certain special education is necessary. The Eastern modes of thought and feeling, faithfully reflected in the habits of life, are so different from those of a European, that in ignorance of the first it is impossible for him to understand the last. He might as well pretend to understand a mathematical demonstration from its last expression.

The secret of the charm by which the East attracts some minds is inexplicable to others. Even a knowledge of the language, that indispensable key to forming a judgment of any people, is not of itself sufficient. It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to describe the fascination of life in the East. It possesses a fatal charm, which deprives him who has once tasted it, of his zest for the more comfortable but infinitely less poetical life of Europe. The decorous conventionalisms, unknown to the Oriental, which are our second nature, are felt to be sadly monotonous and empty when one returns to them again. Yet I would not have it thought that I mean by this, the escape from the wholesome checks imposed upon us by society. The lively and pretty English lady was asked what charm she found in the residence she had chosen for herself at Florence, the shabby apartment on the third floor, the untidy

may coin a word) which is the characteristic of the Eastern. Of course I speak of the common herd, not of exceptional men, not of those who think, well or ill, for their whole generation. No one who has mixed with the middle and lower orders in the East, can have failed to remark that the Oriental is pre-eminently a thinking being.

I might go on through pages, still leave much unsaid, and still fail to convey the idea, which I am seeking. I shall content myself with saying, that it is to the Old-World tone of Oriental life, to its trustfulness in God and self, to its individuality in short, that I am inclined to ascribe the charm which I cannot escape, but which escapes my pen.

The race amongst whom I have lived the most, the race which I saw for too short a time in the Hedjaz in its most perfect development, the race which I admire, and believe to be the most admirable, in the East, is the Arab. It retains much of its earlier simplicity and heartiness, and in Arabia Proper has successfully resisted the contamination of the Turkish dominion. The vices of the Turks are unknown, except among the motley inhabitants of Jidda, Mecca, and Medina. They have taken no hold of the Arab of the hills and desert. He groans under the Turkish oppression when it reaches him, but he does not give way to despair.

He believes in yesterday and to-morrow, and this consoles him for to-day. He has seen the Egyptian Pharaoh and the Persian King, the Roman Emperor and the Abyssinian Najash, swoop down upon his land like birds of prey, but he has seen them swept off, like a cloud of locusts into the desert, leaving no trace but partial desolation easily repaired, behind them. Such he is confident will be the near end of the Turks. Content if he can avoid the hot blast to-day, he husband his energies for the morrow which he foresees. Even the Fellah Arabs of Egypt, debased as they are from the original type, have this feeling; but I speak rather of those free sons of the desert, whose stalwart forms and noble bearing bespeak a self-sufficing energy; this I have admired, and even as an Englishman could envy. They are the first-born of freedom. No conquest has ever bent them, no foreign sway has ever extended beyond the shores of their peninsula. The desert, so inhospitable to other men, is the stronghold of their liberty. Sultans may proudly call themselves servants of the Haramain, but their servitude will never become a domination beyond the walls of the fortified towns, where they entertain foreign garrisons, so long as the wide sands of the desert offer Freedom to her votaries.

Our civilisation, indeed, they neither understand, nor wish for, nor at present need; but they are not lawless; they bow to the patriarchal authority of their chiefs, an authority based on no written law, but whose limits they well know. Without the machinery of government,—with laws, simple, but strictly defined, to which they yield a ready obedience,—they may be said in one sense to enjoy the most perfect form of civil government, as well as the most ancient in the world. A society self-governing, where the laws require no bureaucracy to administer, no police or armies to enforce them, is the ideal of a happy republic. It is true that their ideas of right and wrong are somewhat different from ours, but so long as they are faithful to those ideas they are entitled to our admiration. To rule such a people might satisfy the ambition of an Alexander or a Cæsar; it might be, that of a Washington. Though not to be governed by European codes, or Turkish despotism, they are not indomitable.

CAIRO,  
*January 5, 1855.*

THE END.



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